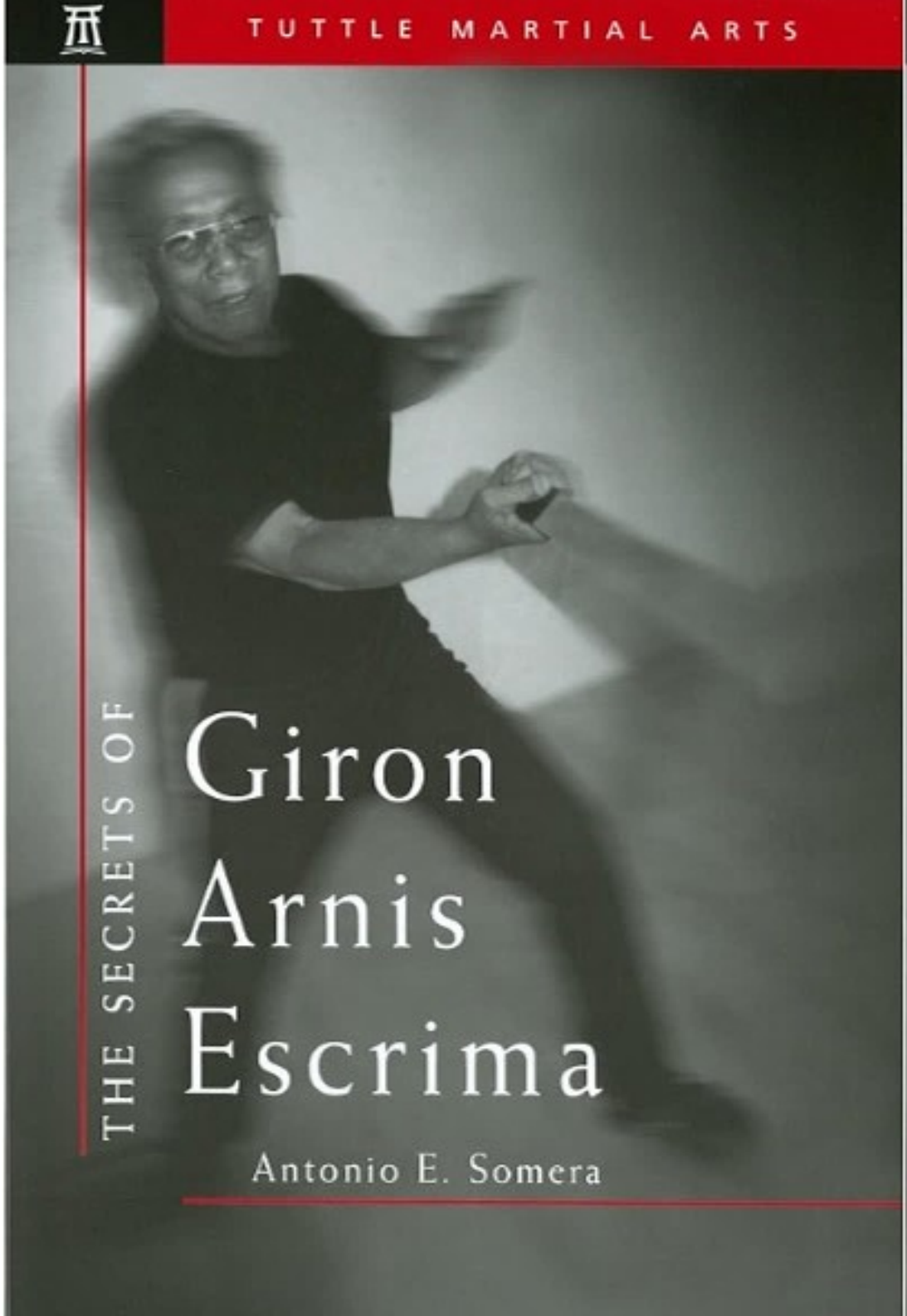

TUTTLE MARTIAL ARTS
THE SECRETS OF
Giron
Arnis
Escrima
Antonio E. Somera

FILIPINO AMERICAN CENTER

The Secrets of Giron Arnis Escrima

Antonio E. Somera

The Secrets of

Giron Arnis Escrima

Antonio E. Somera

CHARLES E. TUTTLE CO., INC.
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Dedication

In loving memory of my father,
Celestino "Chester" Serna Somera (1915–1995).

I would first like to dedicate this book to my loving and beloved wife, Sally, who has stood by me and has inspired me mentally and emotionally in my pursuit of the art I love so much. To my parents, Chester and Frances Somera, who raised me to believe in myself and to be proud of my Filipino heritage. My father, Chester, boarded the *President Hayes* in June of 1930, at the age of fifteen, to seek his fortune in a new land called America. My father is my strength. My mother, Frances (Dolly), married my father on April 1, 1954, and had to deal with the prejudices that went along with a culturally mixed marriage. She also worked along side my father for over forty years in the fields of Stockton, California. My mother is my love. To my brother, Chester Jr., who always protected me from the cruel actions of others while growing up as a mestizo. My sister, Felecitas (Felly), who also experienced the same cruel acts while growing up as a mestiza.

To my former karate teachers, Rodney Hu Sensei, Malcom Equinoa Sensei, and Eric Shingu Sensei, who without knowing it inspired me to pursue our Filipino art. To Dave Duckworth and Mel Won, who in my early years of education inspired me to be the best I could be.

I would also like to dedicate this book to all the past and present *manongs* and *manangs* that struggled and sacrificed in the early years to make our life better. To the past and present students of the Bahala Na Martial Arts Club for keeping our art alive. To uncle Carlos and Alberta, you are always in my thoughts and heart.

Last but not least, I would like to dedicate this book to Grandmaster Leo M. Giron, who has patiently taught me the art of my forefathers, who to many of his students is not only a wonderful person and an excellent teacher, but a great friend.

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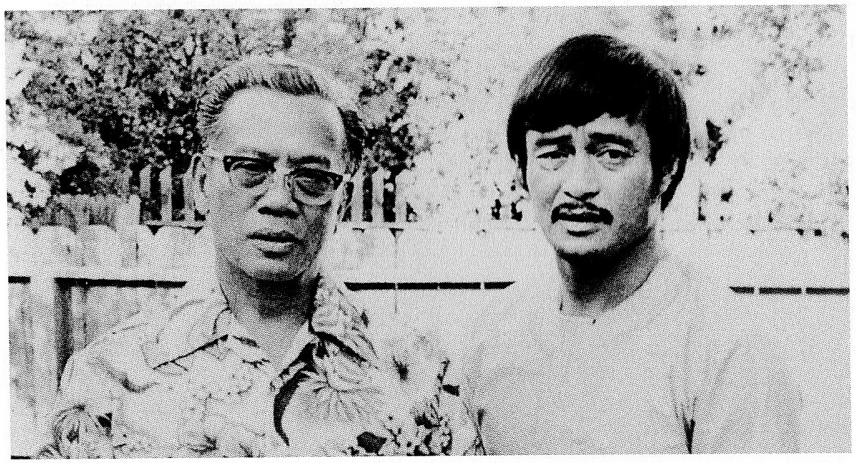
▲ Foreword ▲

by Dan Inosanto

It is indeed an honor and a privilege to write this foreword for Grandmaster Leo Giron's book. Grandmaster Giron is the last living member of a legendary group of martial artists from the Stockton, California Filipino community.

At one time, Stockton had the largest Filipino population in the United States. Because of this Stockton was nicknamed "Little Manila." The population of Stockton consisted of Filipinos from all over the islands, representing the different ethnicities of the Philippines.

The art of escrima was rarely taught in the Filipino community of Stockton. The Filipino martial arts were highly secretive and all training sessions were closed-door affairs. Many World War II veterans had at least a working knowledge of escrima. Most of them did not teach or share the art with the Filipino community or the general public. The art was held in such high regard that knowledge of it was considered "secured" and



quite often the sons, daughters, spouses, etc., had no knowledge of the skill and expertise that existed within their own families.

Grandmaster Giron was one of the first instructors to teach the art of escrima to the Filipino community in northern California, and one of the first to share his knowledge outside of the Filipino Community.

In the late 1960s, I had the honor of training under Grandmaster Giron when very few people knew of the existence of escrima. I found Grandmaster Giron to be a very humble, generous, patient, and giving instructor, both in time and knowledge. One of the highlights of my martial art career occurred on December 26, 1973, when I became the first student to graduate from his system. I truly admire, respect, and love this man. I consider him to be my second father.

Grandmaster Giron brings the rare combination of fighter and teacher to his students. His use of the art in actual combat in the jungles of the Philippines during World War II, displays the effectiveness and usefulness of his methods.

Grandmaster Giron has produced many top level instructors in his system. His fighters competing in the full-contact tournament circuit are some of the best in the United States' West Coast, and are renowned not only for their fighting tenacity but also for being hard-hitters. The principles and concepts he gave me in his art have allowed me to better understand the many other systems and styles that I later studied. The principles, concepts, and philosophy of the Giron system can be used in the empty-hand arts as well as in the weapon arts.

This book is a tribute to the art and will shed more light on the man and his system. I feel that this book is long overdue, and will be a welcome addition to any martial artist's library, not only from a technical stand point, but also for it's historical and cultural value.

▲ Acknowledgments ▲

I would like to thank Grandmaster Leo M. Giron who has shared his knowledge to so many of us and taught us not only the art of escrima but also the Filipino culture and history.

I would like to thank the following *guros* (teachers) who have helped Grandmaster Giron and myself to illustrate the art: Dexter Labonog (the head and senior instructor of the Bahala Na Club), Roy Atay, Dave Paler, Glenn Abresy, June Gotico, Barry Shreiarr, David Hines, Steve Tarani, and Jim Johnson.

I would like to thank Guro Dan and Paula Inosanto for all of their help and encouragement with this project and throughout the years.

I thank our photographer, Kim Rose, who at a moment's notice drives all the way to Stockton to take our pictures, whether for this book or for any other Bahala Na function.

To Rob Farrens and the staff of the Stockton Athletic Club for allowing us at any time to use their wonderful facilities.

To Besar Pendakar Herman Suwanda for your guidance and support.

I thank the Bahala Na Martial Arts Association for keeping our art alive.

And, on behalf of Grandmaster Leo M. Giron and the staff of the Bahala Na Martial Arts Association, we extend our gratitude to Mark V. Wiley and Tuttle Publishing, whose books continue to set the standard of excellence.

▲ Introduction ▲

In the late 1960s, Guro Daniel Inosanto, one of Grandmaster Leo Giron's early students, set out on a quest to learn about one of the hidden treasures of his heritage, the low-profile existence of an elite number of Filipino-Americans known as masters in the fighting arts of the Philippines. These early escrima masters had long ago migrated to the United States and, under the cover of secrecy, had shared their wisdom with only a select few. From the rare opportunity to meet, observe, and interview these individuals in both California and Hawaii came a published series of articles and, later, a book titled *The Filipino Martial Arts*. This was groundbreaking research, in some cases revealing the identities, styles, and methods of escrima "play" for the first time to the outside world.

In 1997, Mark Wiley's *Filipino Martial Culture* appeared, featuring the complete history, weapons, systems, and masters of the Filipino martial arts in the United States and the Philippines. Grandmaster Giron proudly stands as one of only eighteen masters to have an entire chapter of the book dedicated to him and his art form.

Now at the age of eighty-six years, Grandmaster Leo M. Giron, a native son of Bayambang, Pangasinsn, Philippines, stands virtually alone among his generation as an active teacher of these arts, imparting history and knowledge to his close knit family of students. The time has now arrived to cast light on the substance and depth of the art which the grandmaster has scrupulously held in trust for so many generations.

After meeting Grandmaster Giron for the first time, many people comment on the professorial manner of a man whose skills and knowledge are rooted in deadly combat. Any contradiction is quickly dispelled, however, when Grandmaster Giron deftly demonstrates both in words and deed the direct connections between the beauty and effectiveness of his art and its basis in actual use. "Combat proven" is

the operative term as the Grandmaster in a very real sense serves as a professor of living history, reaching into his own past and that of his predecessors to illuminate the present. Such light guides us through the following pages, as we view two of the twenty styles of Giron arnis escrima.

Part One
Background and Overview

1

Development of a Fighting Art

The history of the Philippines and her martial arts is a history of influences whose origins span the globe—extending from the Malay Peninsula, the Indonesian Archipelago, China, India, Japan, and the Middle East, to Europe and the Americas. These regions have made an impact on the Philippines through centuries of trade, migration, and conflict. The blood and ashes of such conflict has marked the landscape and national psyche of this great land for over one thousand years. This has involved a virtual kaleidoscope of cultural, ethnic, religious, and linguistic backgrounds. Throughout the ages, the people of these islands have observed, learned, and adapted from others where necessary while reinforcing and refining the wealth of indigenous knowledge already in place.

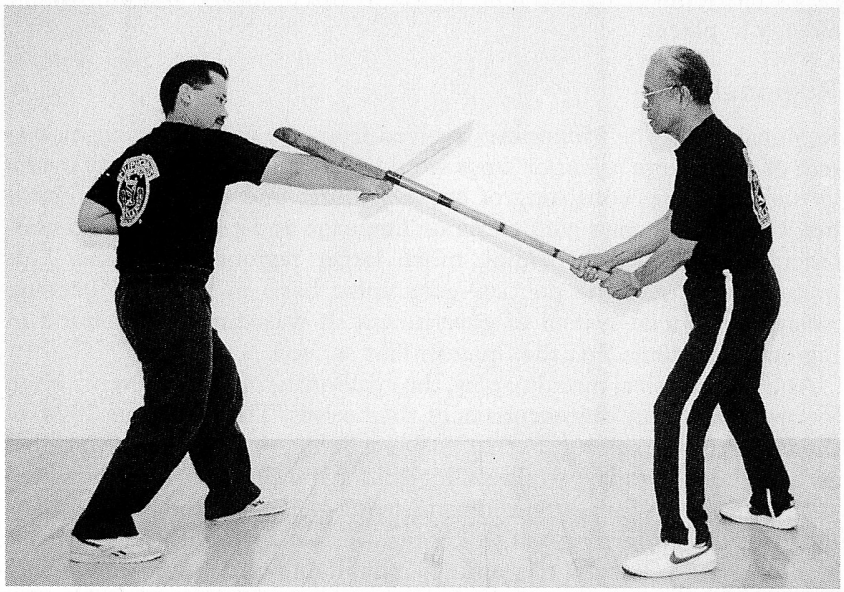
Regionalism

Regionalism in the Philippines evolved from the ancient *barangay* system of rule where *rajahs* or kings would exercise direct authority over a virtual city-state, consisting of between thirty and one-hundred families. Often, barangays with common language and customs would confederate with others, forming much larger regional kingdoms. This eventually formed the political-geographic basis of what has become today's provincial system of government. It was during the period of regional kingdoms that the Spanish first arrived.

As if in a classical morality play, the symbolism of certain events often looms larger than the occurrences themselves. The defeat in 1521 of the Portuguese explorer, Fernando Magallanes, or Ferdinand Magellan as he is known today, while sailing under the Spanish flag, indicated such an event. While attempting to bring the rajah and *datus* (chieftains) of Cebu under Spanish control, Magellan foolishly assumed a lack of martial capabilities among inhabitants and blundered into a conflict which ultimately led to his demise. His nemesis was a king by

the name of Lapulapu. Rajah Lapulapu was named after a colorful and aggressive coral game fish of the area. Lapulapu was not of the people commonly settled in the larger island of Cebu. He was of the Orang Lauts, or man of the high seas, from the southern Celebes.

Magellan had unwittingly encountered a fierce people whose lives were dedicated to freedom and struggle. Magellan's defeat at Mactan became a symbol representing the inherent power of the people to resist the imposition of foreign rule. It is both ironic and illuminating that notwithstanding the long period of the Spanish rule, some 333 years, a short-lived American period, and an even briefer Japanese occupation, it is the event of victory that stands out when characterizing Filipino history. What Magellan failed to understand was that he was dealing with a people of great variety and complexity who were not unprepared for his challenge. Lapulapu and other leaders of common ancestry and experience shared a tradition of acculturation which included the study and training in the arts of war as well as other facets of life. These martial arts have continued to evolve, resulting in many of the styles and systems found in the central and southern regions of the Philippines today. In some parts of the Visayas and Luzon, knowledge of European fencing techniques generated counter measures to be woven into the fabric of indigenous styles and systems. Examples of successful resistance to foreign rule as in the case of the unconquered Moros of the southern Philippines, further served to encourage the



Grandmaster Giron with a panabas

spirit of independence among all peoples of the islands. This spirit frequently surfaced as full-blown revolts throughout Philippine history.

Some ninety years later in a much different part of the islands, it was just such a revolt that proved to be a pivotal factor in the further development of the Filipino martial arts. The location was Pangasinan, Grandmaster Giron's home province. In 1660, a local leader named Andres Malong proclaimed himself king and mounted a popular but short-lived revolt against Spanish rule. Governor Manrique de Lara learned of the rebellion through the capture of a letter from Malong to Don Francisco Manago. The subsequent suppression of this revolt by Spanish forces, in addition to the capture and execution of Malong, led to a scattering of former rebels under arms into the surrounding hills. From these areas of relative security, members of the disbanded units resorted to banditry, preying on local farmers and villagers. Just as the people of the south in an earlier time were not unprepared to meet the challenge of oppression, these local inhabitants banded together in common defense. For centuries, there had been many personal combat styles commonly employed in this region, all with some general relationship in terms of type of weapon, style of movement, or proximity to an opponent. During this time, however, there developed a "new" style named cabaroan.

Cabaroan was well suited to the working farmer or villager who could not devote long hours to training in the traditional short-weapon, block-and-counter styles of more experienced fighters. This new style which is now more commonly described and referred to as *larga mano* (or long hand), was developed through the successful use of the *panabas* and other similar bladed tools used for the clearing of brush or agriculture.

In general, the panabas consists of a twenty-inch blade attached to a twenty-inch bamboo or wooden handle. Although the use of farm implements as a means of self-defense is by no means unique to Luzon, the specific method of employing these tools is what characterizes the larga mano style. The fundamental essence of the style is found in its concepts of fighting range, economy of movement, and its ability to blend with the older styles of arnis and escrima. From this point on both the "old" (cada-anan) and the "new" (cabaroan) escrima and arnis styles continued to grow, often in unison. In fact, Grandmaster Giron, a native of Bayambang, relates that "there eventually came a time when if one was asked what style he played, and he answered both old and new, you would then see the inquirer's tone and general demeanor turn less arrogant, with words carefully chosen to deal with the developing situation."

The Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries

The history of resistance and revolt continued throughout the Philippines for the next two centuries. The successes of the Spanish colonizers during this period may largely be attributed to specific policies which included the use of Spanish or peninsular friars to instill the fear of the Divine against rebellion. In addition, a divide-and-conquer strategy employed peoples of one Philippine region or ethnic background to suppress the revolt of another. This two-hundred year cycle was broken by another Spanish blunder, the martyrdom of three secular or native Filipino priests who were not affiliated with the Spanish friars. In an attempt to discredit the development of an independent priesthood in the Philippines, Spanish authorities exposed the political link between the friars and the government. In 1872, during what may otherwise have become simply another footnote in the history of local revolt, native members of the militia in Cavite province rebelled against additional taxation of their pay vouchers. Authorities seizing upon this as an opportunity to accuse and discredit secular native priests in some unspecified conspiracy, arrested, secretly tried, and executed the three local clerics Fathers Gomes, Burgos, and Zamora. This event served to alienate many citizens from the established Spanish church and became a unifying event for those who began to seriously consider independence. Filipinos were well aware that the independence of Mexico in 1821 began with the actions of the Creole priest, Miguel Hidalgo, in 1810. Cavite thus became another focal point in history, symbolizing the divisions between the colonial authority of Spain and the naturally assumed rights of all Filipinos. At this moment, the quest to be nationalized was prevalent.

It should be noted that during the later part of the nineteenth century, Spain itself was undergoing a period of political turmoil. Much of the Spanish empire in the western hemisphere had vanished under a wave of independence movements. One hundred and sixty thousand Spanish troops were required to deal with 40,000 insurgents in Cuba. Moreover, and the Spanish government under the regency of Maria Cristina was deadlocked and suffered from corruption within. Various conflicting groups were seeking alternatives to the stagnation of a strong monarchy, constitutional parliamentary monarchy, other forms of democratic rule, regional autonomy, and freedom for territories abroad.

One element that played a role in this mix of ideas and opinions was the freemasonry movement. Influenced by the anti-monarchical, anti-clerical upheaval which occurred in France during the latter part of the eighteenth century, freemasonry became a vehicle throughout Europe and its colonial possessions for secretly organizing individuals opposed

to the traditional partnerships of church and state. Given the widespread negative reaction to the executions of Fryers Burgos, Zamora, and Gomes, a strong attraction toward these secret societies took place in the Philippines.

The political movements in both Spain and the Philippine Islands found common interests, but at the early stages did not appeal to a wide range of citizens from either country. In 1888, the Hispano-Filipino Association and the newspaper *La Solidaridad* were established in Barcelona, Spain, later relocating to Madrid. Under the protection of the laws of association in Spain surfaced the names of Serrano, Ramos, Luna, Lopez, Rizal, and Pilar. Jose Rizal returned to the Islands in 1892 and before being exiled to Dapitan, Mindanao in 1893, succeeded in organizing the beginnings of La Liga Filipina, based upon Masonic organization and nurtured by the writings of *La Solidaridad.* La Liga Filipina soon gave way to a new organization as earnest attempts were made to broaden the base of support for independence. Thus, the Katipunan (revolutionary brotherhood) was formed under the guidance of Macario Del Pilar in Madrid, and the more direct leadership of Andres Bonifacio, Ladislao Diva, Teodoro Plata, and others. By 1896, Katipunan membership in Manila and its provinces alone exceeded 14,000 with no less than 20,000 others residing in Cavite, Batangas, Laguna, and Nueva Ecija provinces. Additional members were spread throughout Luzon.

The Symbols of Unity

This moment in time brought together a convergence of ideas, opinions, and interests, however varied, upon the one unifying concept of independence, and with it all of the symbols of a culture striving for common expression. The initiation rite of the Katipunan highlights the importance of the triangle, the light of candles, and the *pacto de sangre* (blood oath). It is among such symbols that we see intertwined in the soul of the martial arts and the soul of the people.

The triangular footwork patterns carefully developed and perfected by practitioners of escrima and arnis had already been interwoven into the Filipino mind and spirit through generations of symbolism representing the unity of such district components as the three major island groups which together form a nation, or the three major cultural religious influences Christianity, Islam, and animism.

Despite a great variety of techniques and styles of movement, a preponderance of Filipino martial arts closely link or encompass the triangle within a circle. This symbolically associates the finite with the infinite, the linear with the circular, the physical world with the spiritual, beginning and ending with that which is constant. This infusion

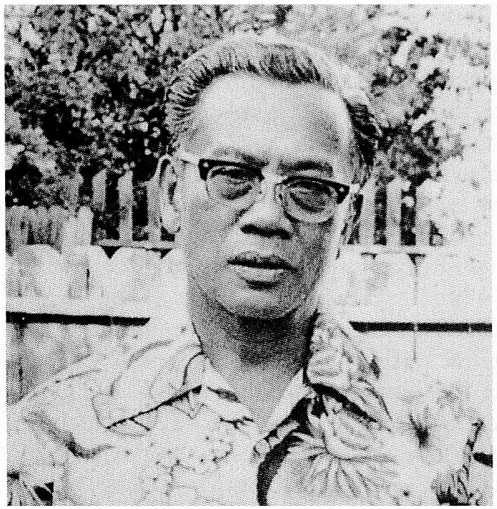
of opposites becomes a Philippine equivalent of the Taoist concept of yin and yang, or unity of opposites. In politics or warfare, as in other forms of human organization, the group is represented by the circle while the pursuit of objectives is represented by linear action.

In 1896, the circle was represented by the light-rayed sun displayed on the Katipunan's red flag of rebellion, the rays representing the eight original province in Luzon that, together, rose against Spanish rule. This symbol remains to this day the essential light of freedom and liberty within the triangle of the Philippine national flag. It is perhaps prophetic that the same graphic symbol that for centuries represented the eight original striking angles for Filipino martial artists has also come to represent the birth of their national struggle for freedom.

Leo M. Giron

Born into this fertile time and place, just fifteen years after the Katipunan uprising, Leo Giron became a child of the revolution. At the time of his birth in 1911, the insurrection against the new American caretakers was winding down. Elements of the Katipunan as well as compatriots in the Veteranos dela Revolution and the Defensores dela Libertad pursued the struggle through various means. As in previous periods in history, the Moros of the south would continue to assert their claims for independence.

Throughout his early life, Leo Giron was raised with an exposure to a variety of local and regional escrima and arnis styles practiced in his province. The province of Pangasinan was a hotbed of activity and by the end of World War I, escrima challenges among practitioners of note



was a common occurrence. The famous Santiago Toledo was the raining champion of the area with numerous title defenses to his credit. As an indication of the level of activity which took place during this time, Grandmaster Giron notes that Toledo found it necessary to relocate from his native town of Binalonan to Dagupan so that he would be immediately available for challenges. Such competitions were a daily occurrence, making way only on Sundays for cock fighting.

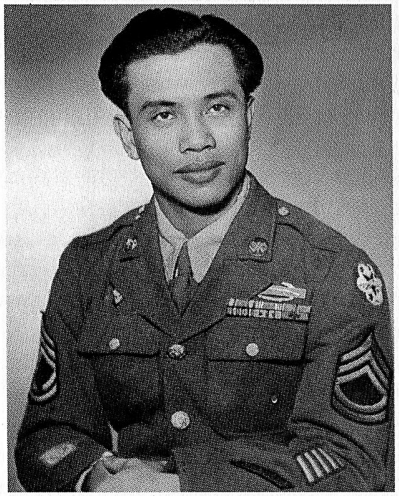
Many years later the reign of Toledo, through age and declining activity, gave way to that of Dalmacio Bergonia from the neighboring province of Cagayan. Bergonia remained in the Philippines and became famous for the Macabebe or double-stick style, also known as sinawali.

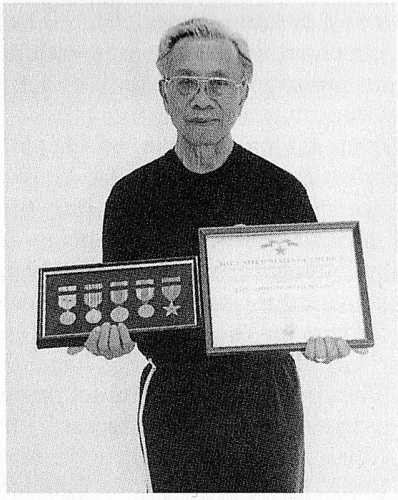
Giron's early training began with three individuals in Pangasinan. The first was Benito Junio, primarily a larga mano man, described as " a drinker, but a great fighter." Junio was followed by the Giron's cousin, Julian Bundoc, an instructor under Junio. The third man was Fructuso Junio, a Macabebe style fighter and the uncle of Benito Junio. It was Fructuso who first shared with Giron the importance of distinguishing between the "old" (cada-anan) and "new" (cabaroan) styles of Luzon.

The lineage of the influential styles from Pangasinan and Cagayan, such as those of Toledo and Bergonia, was transmitted directly to Giron through one of Bergonia's graduates and contemporaries, Flaviano Vergara. Vergara originated from Santa Cruz in Ilocos Sur, migrated first to Hawaii and then to California. Giron first met and worked with Vergara after himself migrating to California in the 1920s. Their association began while working in the prune orchards in Meridian, California, west of Yuba city, in 1929. Vergara's influence on Giron's understanding and style of play is significant, as he was able to articulate the relationship between the defensive concepts of cada-anan and the fluidity and long range movements and techniques of cabaroan. It was he who advised that it would be up to the student after graduation to fill in the gaps between the two styles. This was the beginning of Giron's quest to complete the *abanico del maestro*, the twenty styles listed on the "master's fan" that constitute Giron arnis escrima. The two men eventually went their separate ways as a period of peace and work in the fields of California followed.

World War II

This tranquil period was interrupted by the onset of World War II, and the two men were again thrown together by circumstance. Grandmaster Giron had been working in southern California's Imperial Valley at the outbreak of the war, and by October of the following year had joined the United States Army. Giron was eventually shipped to Fort Ord, California, where he found his friend and

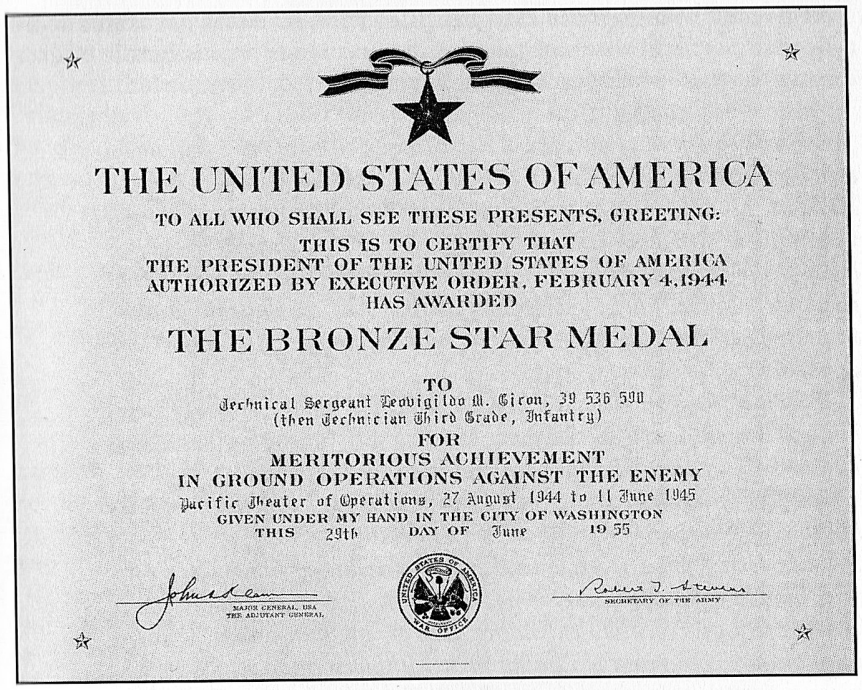




teacher Vergara. By January of 1943, they were again separated and Grandmaster Giron did not hear of Vergara until he himself was about to embark for the Philippines from a ready position in Australia. It was there that Giron learned of Vergara's untimely death from a dynamite explosion in New Guinea. His friend and master had passed from the scene.

During the war in the Philippines, Grandmaster Giron's exploits in hand and weapon combat along with jungle warfare are too numerous to detail here (such accounts are available in Grandmaster Giron's book *Memories Ride the Ebb of Tide*). We will, however, take note of one instance in early June. This was a rainy day when a large batallion of Japanese made a bonsai charge against Giron's position. Each group of Giron's soldiers and guerrillas would guard the trails. They would form a wedge formation and intercept the enemy. One soldier must be in the front as point, with two others on either side, a little to the rear. Giron took the point on the uppermost trail. There were as many as six trails to cover, on both high and low elevations.

Like any bansai charge, the Japanese are always noisy and it seemed like the whole population of Japan was charging, yelling, and shouting—they are not afraid to die. If they don't charge their officers will chop off their heads. The Filipino guerrillas, on the other hand, chewed their tobacco, gritted their teeth, and swung their *bolos,* chopping here and jabbing there. Long bolos, short daggers, pointed bamboo lances, pulverized chili peppers with sand deposited in bamboo tubes to spray so the Japanese cannot see, were all in hand. Giron's adrenaline skyrocketed. One bayonet and *katana* (samurai sword) came simultaneously at him. The samurai sword was in front of him while the bayonet was a little to the left. With Giron's left hand he parried the bayonet, he blocked the sword coming down on him, the bayonet man went by and his body came in line with Giron's *bolo,* which came down and cut his left hip. The Japanese soldier was retaliating with a backhand slash. Giron met his enemy's tricep with his bolo, chopping it to the ground. "*Bakatari,*" yelled the Japanese soldier as Giron advanced forward. The men on each side would finish them off. Another Japanese soldier charged at Giron, who did an inside block and countered with a slash to the man's stomach. Giron's bolo bounced off, however, since the soldier was wearing a heavy leather pack strap from his waist to his shoulder. Giron returned with a slash to the back of the man's knee. As the soldier fell, Giron advanced forward to meet the enemy. More charged and the encounters ensued.



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TO ALL WHO SHALL SEE THESE PRESENTS, GREETING:

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT
THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
AUTHORIZED BY EXECUTIVE ORDER, FEBRUARY 4,1944
HAS AWARDED

THE BRONZE STAR MEDAL

TO
Technical Sergeant Leovigildo M. Giron, 39 536 590
(then Technician Third Grade, Infantry)

FOR
MERITORIOUS ACHIEVEMENT
IN GROUND OPERATIONS AGAINST THE ENEMY
Pacific Theater of Operations, 27 August 1944 to 11 June 1945
GIVEN UNDER MY HAND IN THE CITY OF WASHINGTON
THIS 29th DAY OF June 19 55

MAJOR GENERAL, USA
THE ADJUTANT GENERAL

SECRETARY OF THE ARMY

Giron serving as sergeant in the Allied Intelligence Bureau, was a member of one of General Douglas MacArthur's own personal groups of commandos. They served the as eyes, ears, and hands for the general. Giron was a part of an elite group of fighting men along with the Filipino guerrillas that performed covert operations in the jungles of northern Luzon. Giron and his group of fighting men served in the most extreme and dangerous conditions in the jungles for over a year.

As a result of his service, Sergeant Leo M. Giron was decorated with a Bronze Star and received many more accolades for his heroic efforts during the war. The letter accompanying his decoration read:

By direction of the President of the United States of America, under the provisions of Executive Order 9419, 4 February 1944 (Sec. II, Bulletin 3, WD, 1944), a Bronze Star Medal is awarded by the Commander-in-Chief, United States Army Forces, Pacific, to the following-named officer and enlisted men for heroic achievement in connection with military operations against the enemy in Luzon, Philippine Islands, during the period indicated, with citation for each as shown herein below:

Technical Sergeant Leovigildo M. Giron, 39536996, Signal Corps, United States Army. 27 August 1944 to 11 June 1945. Address: Bayambang, Pangasinan, Philippine Islands.

Citation for each of the above name officers and enlisted men is as follows:

Volunteering for a secret and dangerous military intelligence mission, he was landed by submarine in Luzon, Philippine Island, where he assisted in successfully extending lines of communication, securing vital weather data and obtaining military information which proved of the greatest assistance to impending military operations. By his loyalty, daring, and skillful performance of duty under most hazardous condition, he readied a campaign for the recapture of the Philippine Islands.

—By command of General MacArthur:
—R.K. Sutherland, Lieutenant General,
United States Army,Chief of Staff.
—Official: B.M. Fitch Brigadier General,
U.S. Army, Adjutant General

Beningo Ramos, an improbable teacher, was assigned as an orderly to Sergeant Giron but, as fortune would have it, he was a professional escrima instructor before the war. After observing the young Sergeant Giron in combat with the bolo, Ramos helped refine his movements and instill a sense of aggressiveness in Giron necessary for his survival. The above citation preceded Giron's discharge from military service and his return to the relative peace of civilian life in the United States.

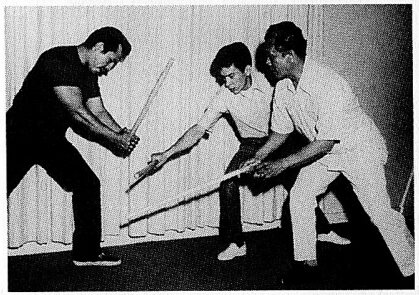
Following the chaos and brutality of war, Giron gave little thought to the martial arts, concentrating instead on family, job, and the occasional fishing retreat. This changed in 1966 when eight nursing students in Chicago, most of them Filipina's, were killed by one man

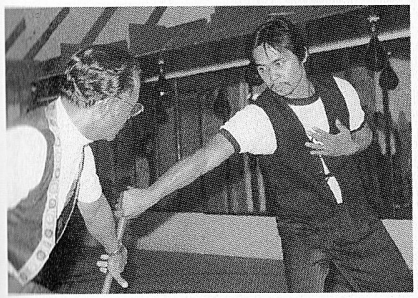
with a knife. As Giron exclaimed, "Eight lives extinguished by a lunatic and not one of them made any effort to subdue the killer!" As it was apparent that the young women suffered from a lack of knowledge and training in the arts of their own culture, Leo Giron began to reconsider the distinctions he had made between the martial arts in war and in peace. In 1968, Grandmaster Giron opened a club in Tracy, California, which later moved to Stockton, producing his first graduates in the early 1970s. Grandmaster Leo Giron has been teaching and graduating students continuously from that point forward. He has justifiably earned the respect of practitioners throughout the world as a major influence of the continuing development of the Filipino martial arts.

Giron's Philosophy of Escrima

It is Grandmaster Giron's wish that we establish in our minds that we learn the art of escrima for the sake of self-preservation. In simple words, we learn the art to defend ourselves from destruction by our fellow human beings that have nothing better to do other than inflicting injury upon others.

In order to learn the art of self-defense there must be someone to assume the part of aggressor, and deliver blows to the designated areas of the body. It must be understood that no one is learning the art of





destruction, no one is learning how to inflict injury upon their fellow human being. The person delivering blows to the striking areas of the body only serves to direct the student of self-defense as to what to do and how to do it. There will be repetitious actions and frustrating moments when a technique in Giron arnis escrima is learned. The instructor must direct the student as to properly abide by the requirements as specified.

The question is, then, why do learn the art of escrima? The answer is simply that we learn the art to preserve our life. We train to insure the legacy of our forefathers who handed their art down to us. We also train to commemorate our forefathers who, beginning in 1596, were forced by the Spanish regime to practice the art in secrecy.

Giron arnis escrima was developed to perpetuate the art for the purpose of preserving life. The two style in the Giron system outlined in this book are estilo de fondo and cadena de mano. Estilo de fondo utilizes twelve striking areas (or angles of attack). The number twelve is symbolic of the twelve pairs of ribs on the human body, which protect the internal (life-sustaining) organs. To effectively strike the vulnerable areas on the body, you must break through the four primary defensive actions found in estilo de fondo. These are: blocking (e.g., the roof block) (Fig. 1); deflecting (e.g., hard or soft block) (Fig. 2); parrying (e.g., hard or soft with the empty hand) (Fig. 3); and evading (Fig. 4).

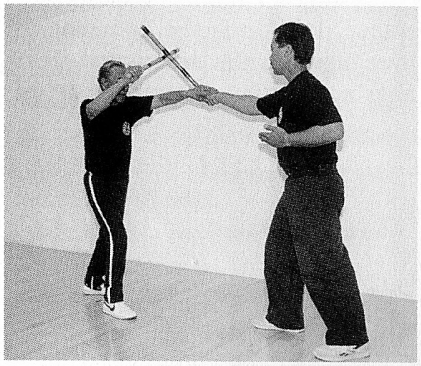


Fig 1

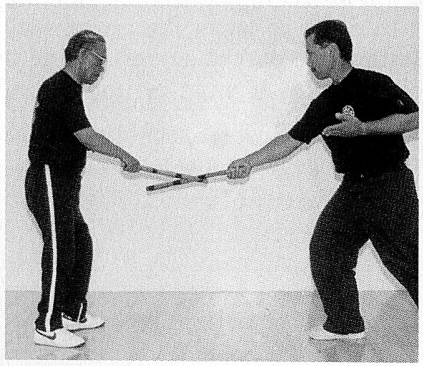


Fig 2

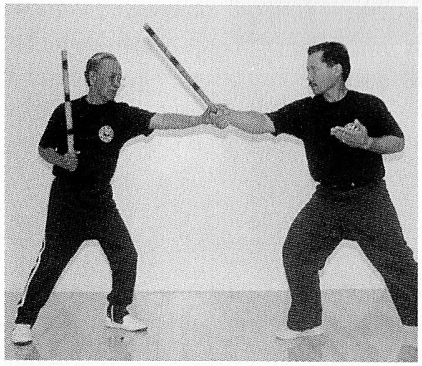


Fig 3

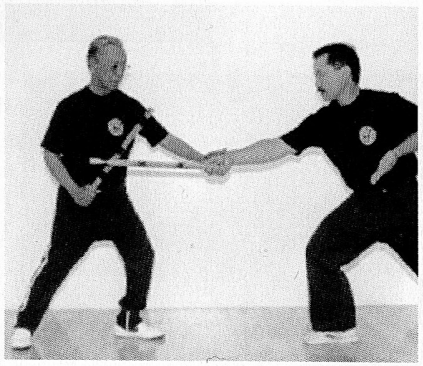


Fig 4

All of these must be interwoven during combat so that life will thrive out of the artist and preserve further life—the home of the four elements. This symbolizes that life is the union of the elements, earth (out of which God molded the frame of the body), air (the breath of life that God blows into the nostrils of man), fire (which God provides so the body will not freeze), and water (which God provides to hydrate the body).

Giron arnis escrima is a model of life preservation based on the daily activities of common people through the four seasons. The changes of climate through the seasons suggest the gradual intensity of training and the calculated actions and pressure of offense so that the student will put more effort into his prescribed defenses. The methods of offense and defense in Giron arnis escrima are calculated to gradually increase the knowledge of the student, helping him to become proficient. Grandmaster Giron strongly suggests that the students follow the plan diligently. "Do not rush to be the champion," he advises. "Knowing how to go by the system of self-defense, practicing constantly, might in the future put the champion's belt around you."

Giron arnis escrima is a model to quickly educate people in the skills of self-defense. The main purpose is to propagate the art of escrima, in addition to Philippine history and culture. Giron arnis escrima is only a handle identifying an implement. So, if you have doubts, dip your thinking power into the pot of life and refresh your mind. Since this system is a positive model, the answer will come to you.

The Bahala Na Filipino Martial Arts Academy

Leo Giron opened his first licensed escrima club in Tracy, California in September of 1968. It was the intent of Grandmaster Giron at that time to establish an organization that was governed by a Constitution and By-Laws. His thought was to form a democratic body of government within the Bahala Na Filipino Martial Arts Club. With Giron's past experience and leadership in a fraternal order called the Legionarios del Trabajo in 1968, he had already accumulated over thirty-one years of service to his Filipino lodge. This set the standard and foundation for his dream to become a reality.

In 1979, after years of preparation, the first official meeting of the Bahala Na Martial Arts Club was called to order. This organization is governed by the people and players of the club. Its rule is by the majority, its belief is in the practice of social or economic equality for all the

members of the organization. The oath of the Bahala Na Martial Arts Club states:

We, the member of the Bahala Na Martial Arts Club, in order to come close to perfection in the Filipino arts of escrima and arnis, and in order to promote good relationships amongst the members and with other people by maintaining a high standard, qualitative, and well-disciplined practitioners, do hereby associate ourselves and ordain and establish this Constitution and By-Laws.

The Bahala Na Martial Arts Club is an organization dedicated to perpetuate and promote the art of escrima and culture of the Philippines, as taught by Grandmaster Giron. In order to effect this mission, teamwork is essential. Teamwork is recognized to be the most essential element in establishing a firm foundation in any organization. A good martial artists must reconcile in his or her heart the true correlation between competition and cooperation. If this is done, there will be no conflict between the two. Members of the Bahala Na Martial Arts Club have long been aware that effectively running an organization and overseeing the spread and perpetuation of a cultural art is not a one man show. It is a team operation, and the good team player in any human enterprise always keeps fresh in his mind the objective which can be achieved by being efficient, truthful, always willing, and ever ready.

A good martial artist is also a worthy competitor. He has no time for pernicious criticism of others or the undermining of their confidence. Rather, he does all he can to help others do better. In this case he can live with his conscience. He can wholeheartedly support his team in its

larger competitions because he know in his heart he has done nothing to weaken the fibers of confidence and brotherhood.

The *escrimador* must do his utmost to strengthen himself and others. This is the spirit and the power of winning teams. Appropriate for their accomplishments, an inspiring slogan is selected and called vincitor, and is the spirit of the Bahala Na Marital Arts Club. It is the spirit which produces wonders derived for the combined efforts of all its members. This is not unlike other teams which pursue the versatile and noble movement against the detriments of humanity. And so, I would like to close the chapter with this slogan, a popular saying of Grandmaster Giron: "Peace is not with out conflict. It is the ability to cope with conflict."

2

The Twenty Styles of Giron Arnis Escrima

The Master's Fan

Flaviano Vergara said to Giron: "Do you remember what I told you about the two extremes of your art? The base is the cada-anan, a close quarter combat style, while the larga mano uses distance and is the safer of the two styles. You must be very happy that you have the two because you can tell the difference between the old (cada-anan) and the new (cabaroan) styles." Giron, nodded his head admitting. Falaviano continued: "Suppose someone presented to you a style totally strange to you? You do not recognize it as the old or the new. What are you going to do?" "Is there such a thing, are there anymore?," Giron asked. Falaviano smiled and took a sheet of Giron's writing paper and folded it into a crude-looking fan. Pointing to the left end Flaviano said, "This is your old style (cada-anan, or de fondo)." He then pointed at the right end and said, "This is your new style (cabaroan, or larga mano). The ones in the middle are the unexpected styles, and a true master is able to fill in these gaps. These are the *master's secrets,* and I now entrust them to you. I have held them from you for many years but now they are yours as a remembrance of me." Vergara then proceeded to instruct Giron in the ways of the additional eighteen styles which, when combined, become Giron arnis escrima.

The fan of the master, with its many ribs, is one of the simplest ways of exemplifying that knowledge can be stored, ready to draw on when needed. Examples are found in the opening of a fan for a refreshing breeze, or the drawing on knowledge for self-defense when needed. When it's purpose is over the fan simply closes and is conveniently stored until needed again (Figs. 1, 2).

Fig 1

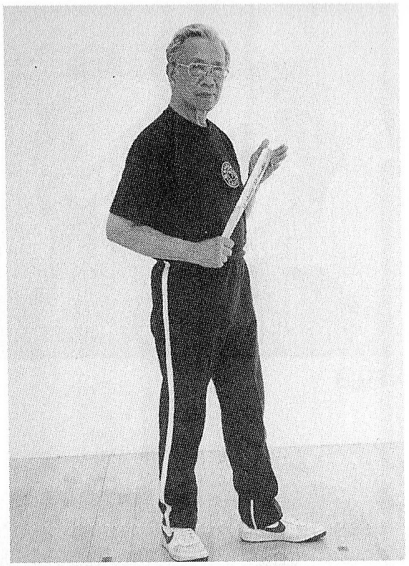


Fig 2

Overview of the Twenty Styles

The following are brief descriptions with illustrations of the primary characteristic of each of the twenty styles found on the master's fan that make up the Giron arnis escrima system. Some of the styles presented hereafter are actual fighting methods; others are concepts or strategies to employ when engaged in an encounter.

Estilo de Fondo

Estilo de fondo refers to holding your ground, anchoring your weight, or planting yourself firmly on the ground. This style is also referred to as a "blocked" or "closed" style. Like a closed door, one must either use force to break in or look for an alternative opening. Although it is not absolutely necessary, estilo de fondo normally requires the use of a short weapon. For the average Filipino who stands about five feet tall, the *bolo* or stick should measure at least two feet. Slight changes in length and weight is governed by the height of the student. However, for training purpose the best results can be obtained by using the standard length of two feet. The de fondo style encompass blocking,

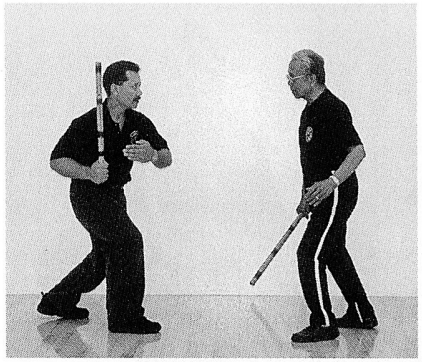


Fig 3

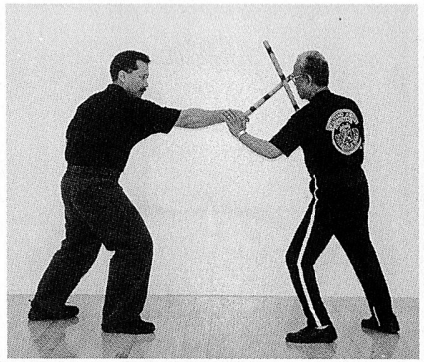


Fig 4

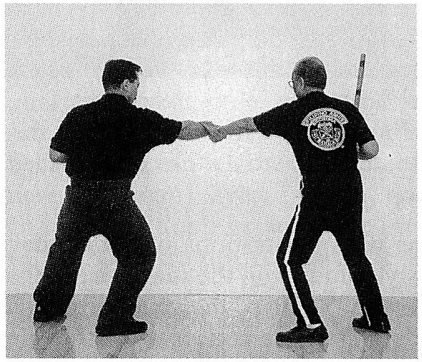


Fig 5

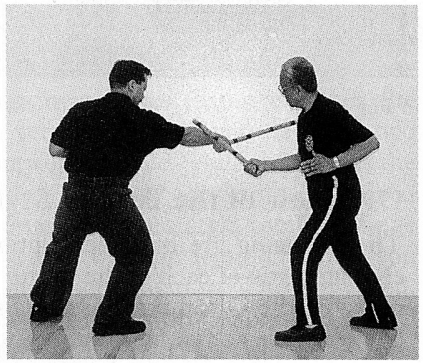


Fig 6

parrying, deflecting, and evading techniques. In this style, the "numbers" are not only related to the angle along which an attack is initiated, but are also related to the area of the body toward which the attack is delivered. The de fondo style is the foundation of Giron arnis escrima (Figs. 3–6).

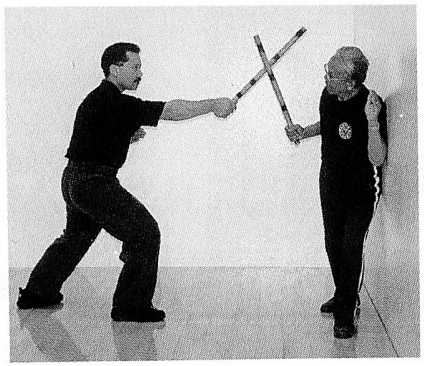


Fig 7

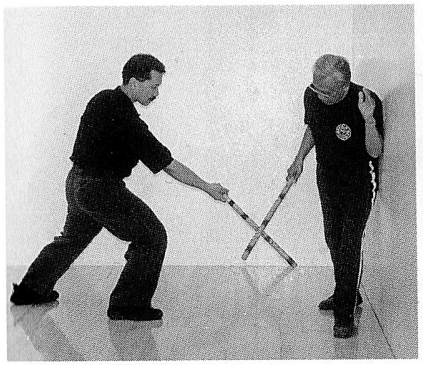


Fig 8

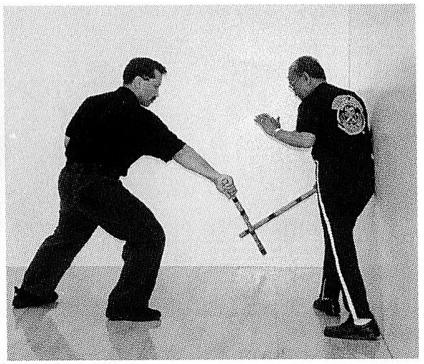


Fig 9

Estilo de Abanico

An *abanico* is a fan, the type used to refresh oneself on a hot summer day. In the art of escrima, estilo de abanico refers to a stick defense which wards off strikes or thrusts coming from the front with a flick of the wrist. This is one of the fastest motions used to deflect an attack, allowing the defender time to reposition himself in a more favorable location or posture. In many instances, shifting the weight of your body laterally from side to side, during the movement, is necessary to effect the abanico style (Figs. 7–9).

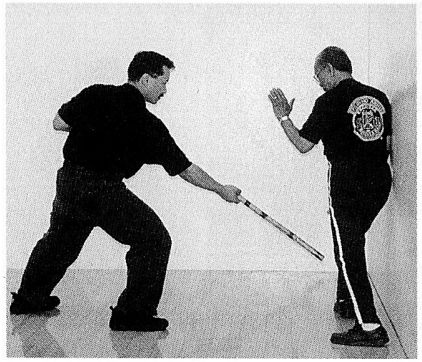


Fig 10

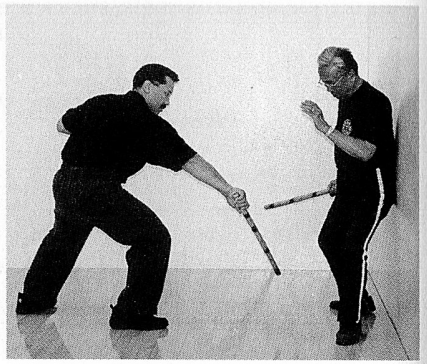


Fig 11

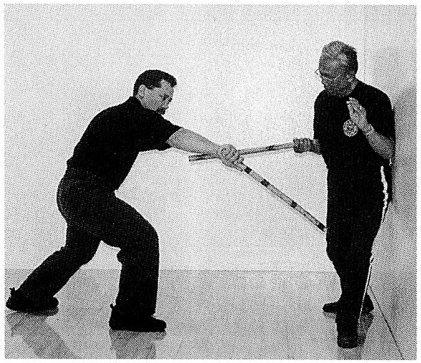


Fig 12

Estilo Abierta

Estilo abierta refers to the open-body style of fighting. The act of employing this style is a cue that the escrimador's calculation of distance is fairly accurate, and that the distance between the two combatants is sufficiently safe and uncompromising. This style affords the practitioner the opportunity to immediately strike the area on his opponent he wants to, rather than using considerable time blocking or parrying an opponent's weapon (Figs. 10–12).

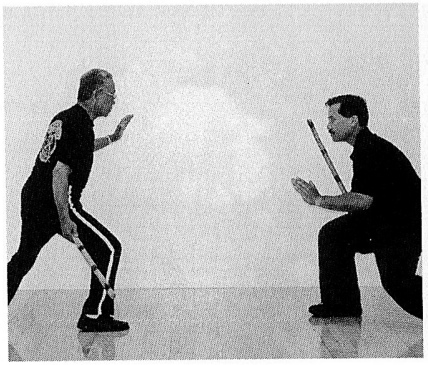


Fig 13

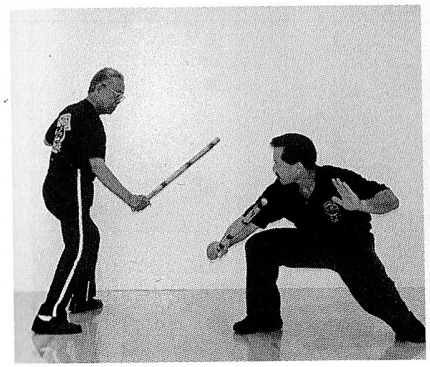


Fig 14

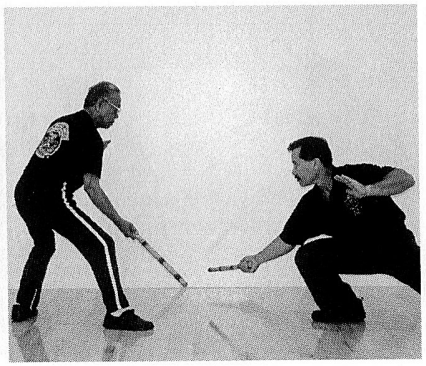


Fig 15

Estilo de Salon

To some, this style may seem awkward in its inclusion of dancing with the art of self-defense. Salon are unprecedented steps of dancing, hence the *salonero* in comparison with the graceful ballet dancer. A ballerina is graceful and meticulous in her performance while the salonero is a rowdy, loud, and obnoxious dancer having a good time. In Giron arnis escrima, this is a style of fast and solid footwork (Figs. 13–15).

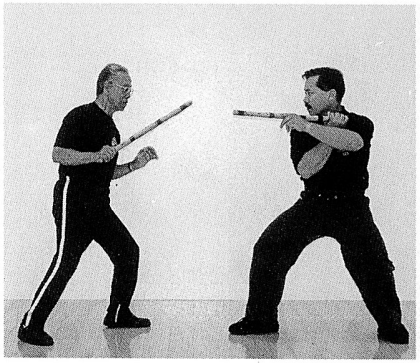


Fig 16

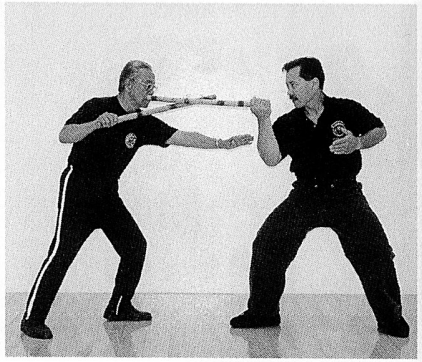


Fig 17

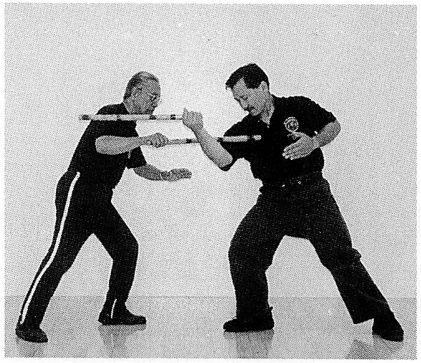


Fig 18

Estilo Sonkete

Estilo de sonkete is a thrusting and poking style using rigid weapons such as *bolo, panabas,* or *baston* (stick). In this style, the *escrimador* thrusts his weapon into an opening in the opponent's guard. This is accomplished in several ways. First, you can parry the opponent's weapon with your left hand and thrust your weapon into the created opening. Second, you can blocking the on-coming weapon and slide your own weapon along your opponent's until the point of yours makes contact with your opponent's body. Either way, to make this style effective, the escrimador must use side stepping to first evade the oncoming strike (Fig. 16–18).

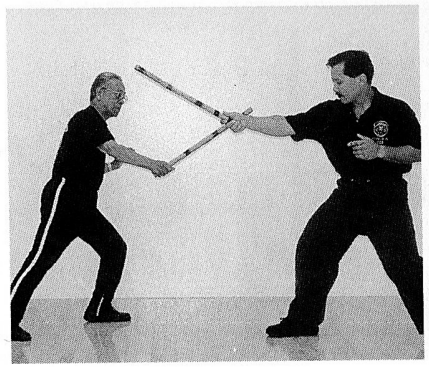


Fig 19

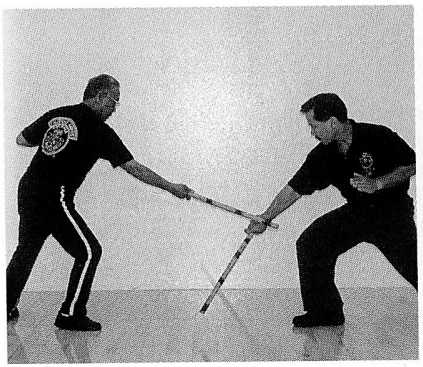


Fig 20

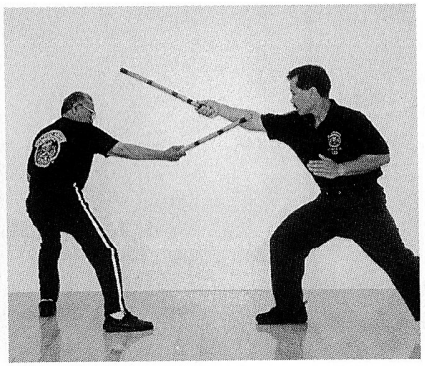


Fig 21

Estilo Retirada

This is the retreating style used to either draw out an opponent's guard to create an opening in his defense, or to open your own guard to lure your opponent into committing himself, thus opening his defense for a counter strike. To effect this style, the fighter moves back and never blocks, he only creates openings and initiates strikes to his opponent's open areas (Figs. 19–21).

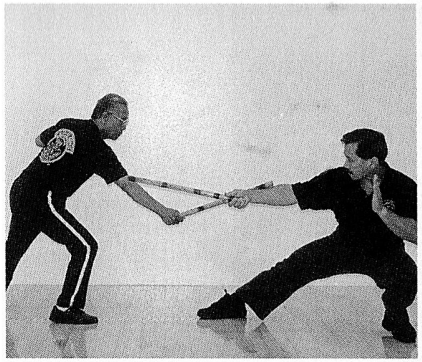


Fig 22

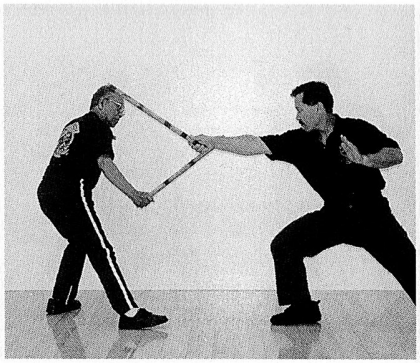


Fig 23

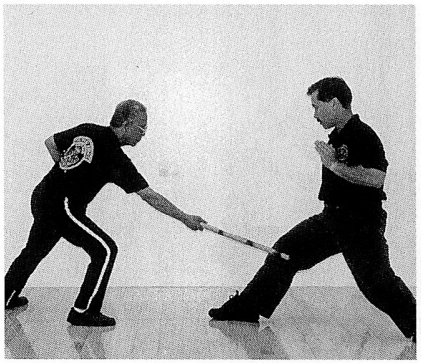


Fig 24

Estilo Elastico

Estilo elastico is the rubber band style. This is a common fighting method among Filipino bolomen, who stretch forward to reach their target. Fighters who indulge in this method are usually veterans of a few encounters. Their style varies from long distance fighting techniques, retreating techniques, or both woven into the larga mano (long hand) style. Estilo elastico complements most combat methods, especially fondo fuerte (Figs. 22–24).

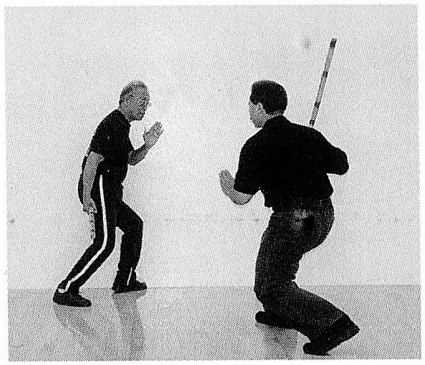


Fig 25

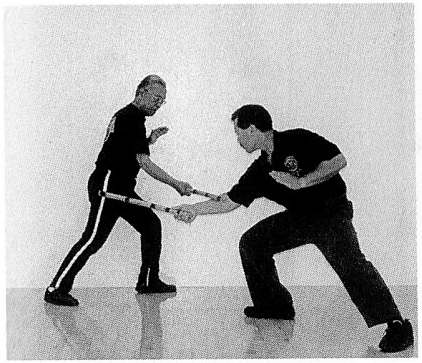


Fig 26

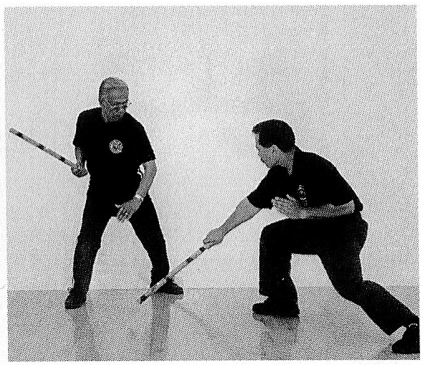


Fig 27

Fondo Fuerte

Fondo fuerte is a style which finds the *escrimador* planting himself effectively into a reliable spot where he can revolve to meet opponents without losing ground. Commonly, a solid grounding is made where one foot can be planted and will not shake, collapse, or slide, especially on unstable ground. The waiting technique is a good tactic so that out of frustration your opponent will be forced to attack, thus giving you the edge of countering to his unprotected areas (Figs. 25–27).

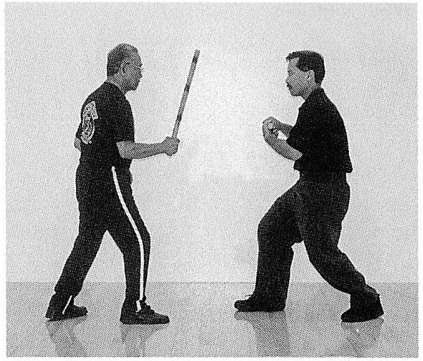


Fig 28

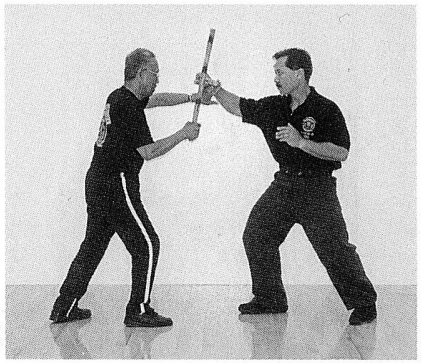


Fig 29

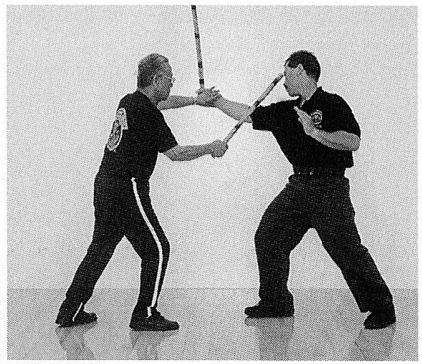


Fig 30

Contra Compas

The Spanish word *contra* means against, while *compas* means timing. As a martial arts term, contra compas means against timing, off-beat maneuvering, or the use of broken rhythm. This little technique induces one to play the basic escrima. This style is a play along, while in the process trying to detect what style your opponent has; or maybe to detect how much training in combat he has. A snap hit to the eyes can take place at any time. If successful, one can pursue and finish the engagement (Figs. 28–30).

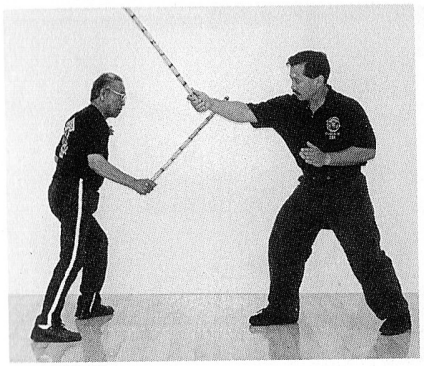


Fig 31

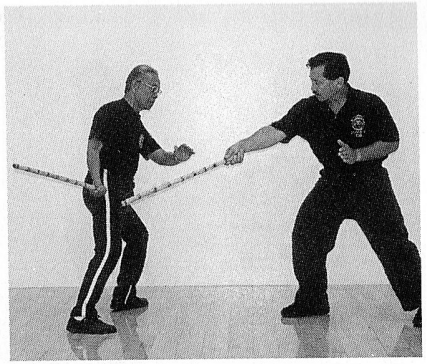


Fig 32

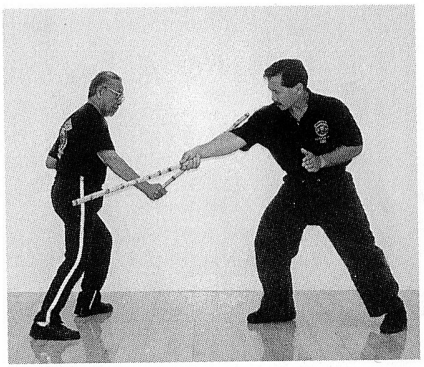


Fig 33

Estilo Redonda

Estilo redonda is a style comprised of round or circular weapon movements which are effective when surrounded by multiple opponents, or when faced with a seasoned practitioner who needs to be kept at bay. While playing this style you must maintain a continuous circular motion with your weapon. A horizontal circle to the ankle and than a horizontal circle to the head is an examples. Estilo redonda can also be used in striking along a vertical circle, both forward and reverse. This style is mainly used for offensive, continuous striking. If your weapon is hit or blocked you can quickly reverse the circle to maintain your aggressive circular striking style (Figs. 31–33).

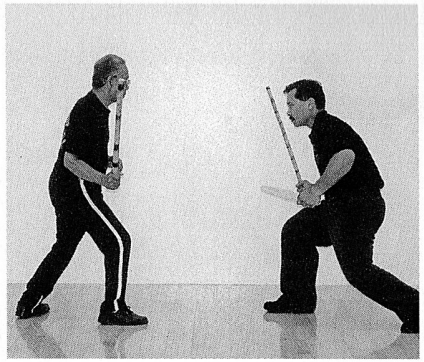


Fig 34

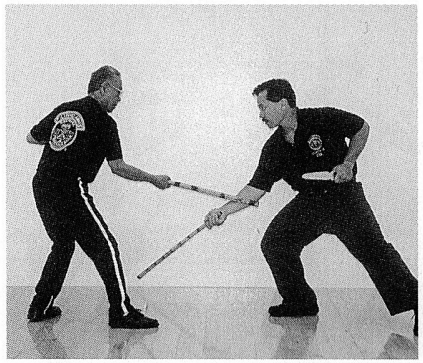


Fig 35

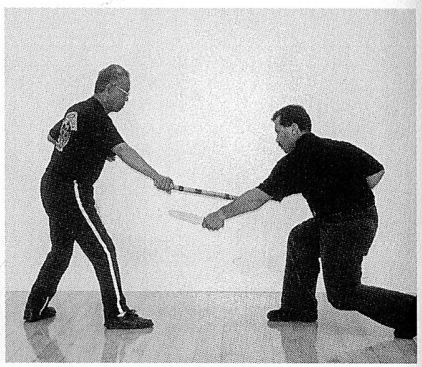


Fig 36

Combate Adentro

Combate adentro implies a encounter against a person armed with a sword and dagger (or stick and dagger), while you are armed with only a dagger or a short knife. Combate adentro encompasses in-fighting techniques for just such an occasion. The odds are stacked against the one armed with only a single weapon while his opponent has two, or more. Are you going to submit? Are you defeated? Never! The escrimador never backs down. If the defender wishes to stay alive he should inflict the first slicing blow at the onset of the altercation. He must hold his only weapon in front of his body and carefully watch for oncoming attacks and, with proper timing, continue to slice alternately from the inside, between the opponent's two arms (Figs. 34–36).

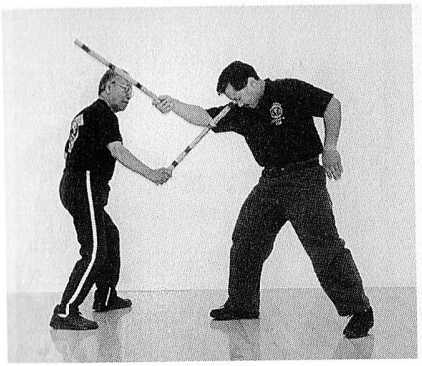


Fig 37

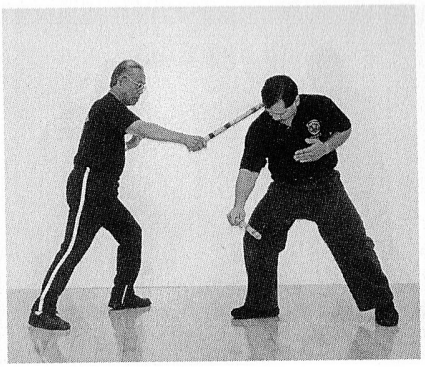


Fig 38

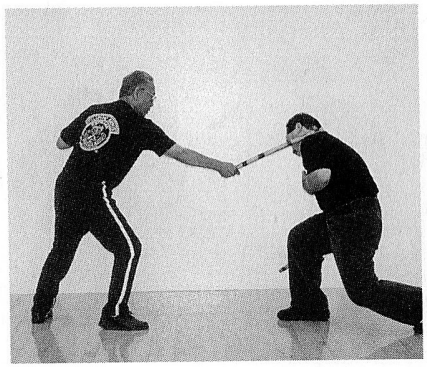


Fig 39

Tero Grave

Tero grave implies very serious or deadly strikes. A good weapons teacher should make it mandatory for his students to know the areas of the body that can cause total disability and, in some cases, death. The master will begin showing the areas of the body that are critical, and need be mindful of during training. This style of play focuses on direct and disabling strikes to five areas: 1) the wind pipe, 2) the eyes, 3) the temples, 4) the carotid arteries, and 5) the medulla oblongata (Figs. 37–39).

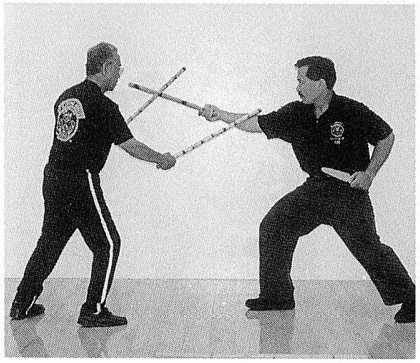


Fig 40

Fig 41

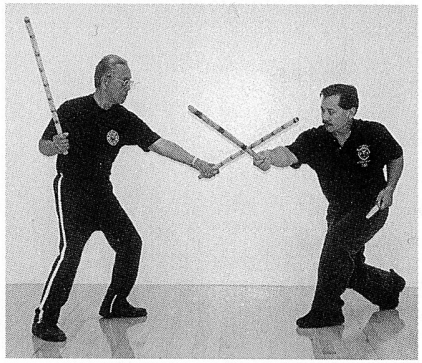


Fig 42

Estilo Macabebe

Macabebe is a name of a town in the province of Pampanga. Many men in this area have chosen a trade peddling clothing materials to families in remote *barrios.* They come before rice harvest time and before fiestas honoring different saints. The men from Macabebe introduced an art of self-defense using two long sticks. Commonly when traveling, one stick supports the bundle of clothing materials while carried on the shoulder and the other to ward off hostile dogs, other wild animals, or thieves that may take one's life in order to steal the goods. The Macabebe style is characterized by the interweaving motions of the sticks, and is also known as sinawali (Figs. 40–42).

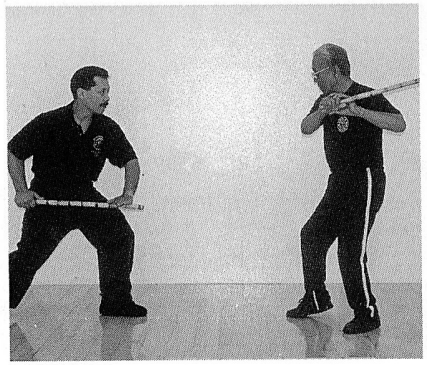


Fig 43

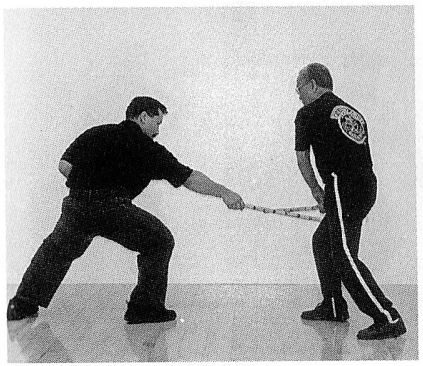


Fig 44

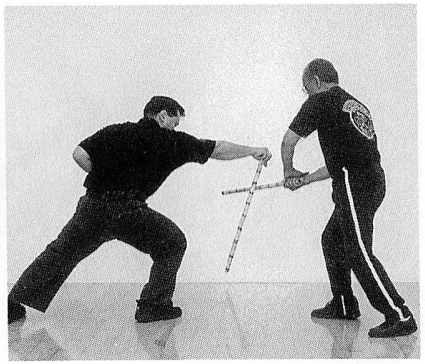


Fig 45

Tero Pisada

There are situations when we are confronted with opponents using a long weapons such a the spear, long pole, or long handle shovel. One cannot just jump and take away the long weapon from an assailant, nor enter in on an opponent without caution. The tero pisada style is appropriate in such situations as it makes use of striking with both hands on one weapon. The objective of this style is to strike the farthest point of the opponent's weapon with such force as to make it vibrate so strongly that it will momentarily paralyze the opponent's hands. This, then, creates the opening and time necessary to effectively enter in and defeat the opponent (Figs. 43–45).

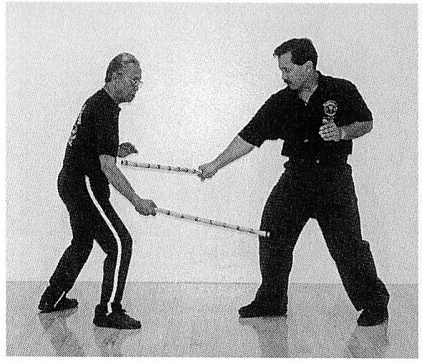


Fig 46

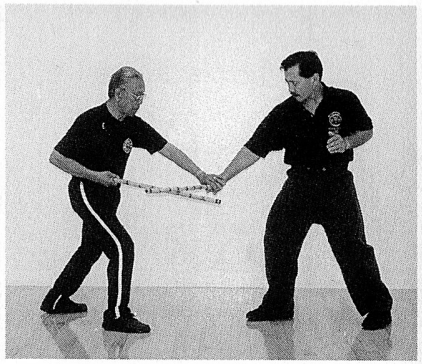


Fig 47

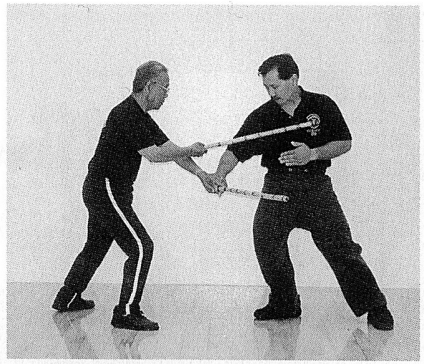


Fig 48

Media Media

The term media media implies half and half, or half of one thing and half of another. In terms of fighting, the concept refers to fighting at half (or medium) range and striking on half (or half-beat) time. In essence, this style employs snap hits, or short rapping strikes, in the medium range to strike an opponent in-between his movements (Figs. 46–48).

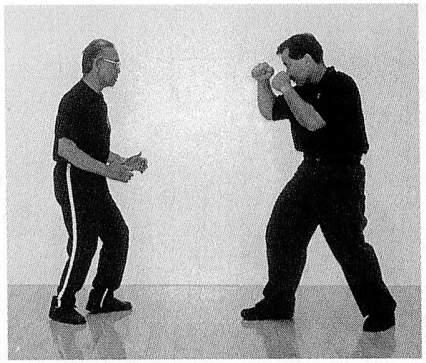


Fig 49

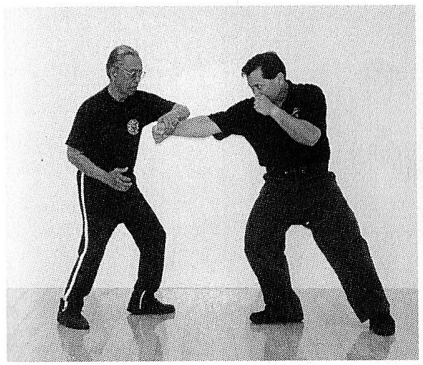


Fig 50

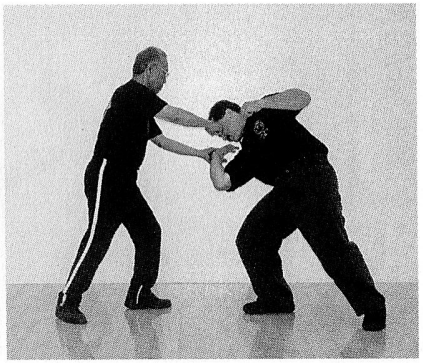


Fig 51

Cadena de Mano

The term cadena de mano literally means "chain of the hands." This is a close-quarter fighting style consisting of a progression from parry to grab, twist, and lock. Your opponent may be armed or unarmed, but you have no weapon. You will always maintain contact with your opponent's hands until you have him in a compromising position. If your opponent continues to be aggressive, you will employ finger locks, joint locks, arm bars, and/or chokes (Figs. 49–51).

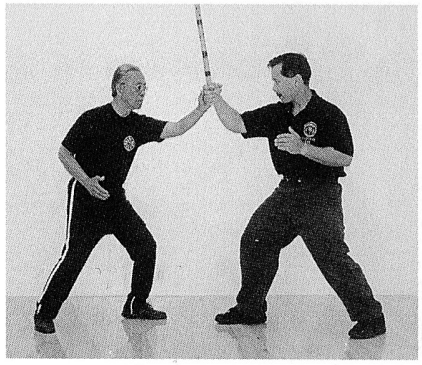


Fig 52

Fig 53

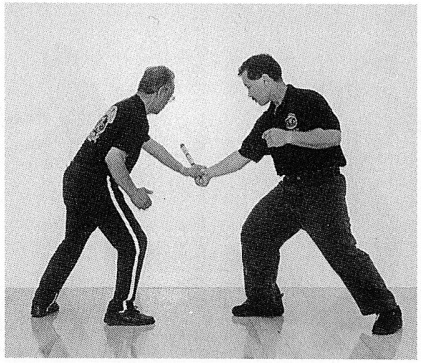


Fig 54

Escapo

Escapo means escape, and implies a system of evading and the warding off of an opponent's oncoming blows. It is a maneuver that suggests the constant feel and contact of one hand to timely divert it's direction to another, preventing contact to its intended target. This requires coordination of the hands and feet and the maintaining of a continuous contact with the opponent's attacking hand. This style cannot be mastered by one's self, but must be drilled with a partner and experienced live (Figs. 52–54).

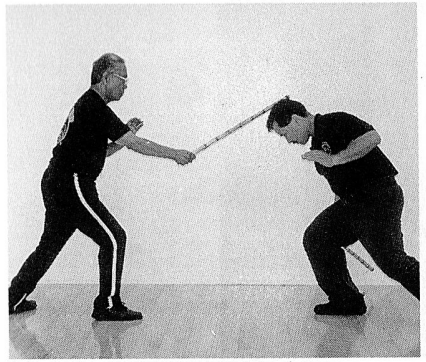


Fig 55

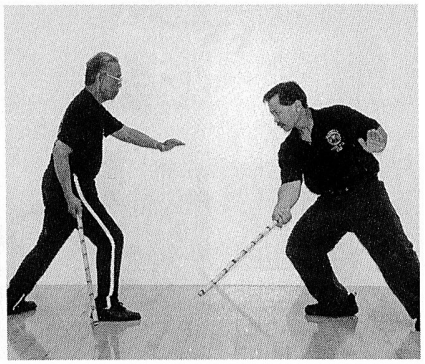


Fig 56

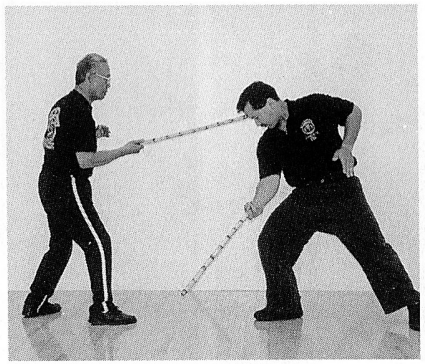


Fig 57

Estilo Bolante

Estilo Bolante refers to the personal fighting style of Master Braulio Bolante from Dagupan, Pangasinan. Bolante was the quiet type who seldom said a word unless spoken to. He was respectful, congenial, and well mannered. However, the other side of him was the man with a bottle of wine. After consuming the alcohol he would become hostile and at times engages in a fight. He was known to have beaten many men and police officers, thus earning him a permanent cot in the local jail house. His style was limited to vertical strikes as he was fond of fighting in doorways so as not to be out-flanked. Estilo Bolante uses no wide movements, and deflects and strikes in continuous up and down movements (Figs. 55–57).

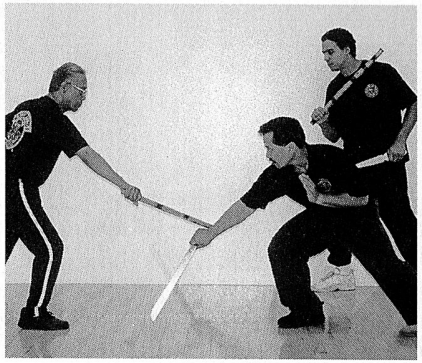


Fig 58

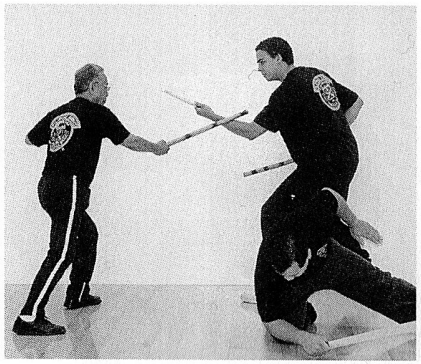


Fig 59

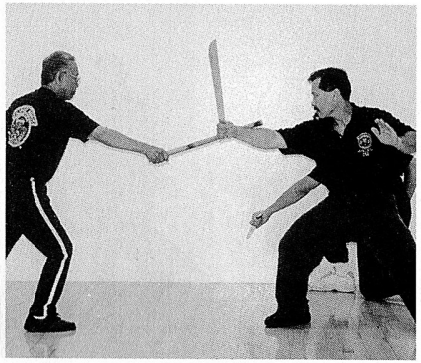


Fig 60

Miscla Contras

Miscla contras implies defending oneself against multiple opponents. It is therefore more a theory of how to deal with such attacks by placing one's self in the best position so as to only face one opponent at a time. Such strategies as placing your back to a wall or moving behind an opponent are employed to effect this style (Figs. 58–60).

Larga Mano

The term larga mano literally menas "long hand," and implies the ability to extend one's reach. Reaching your opponent without jeopardizing safety is foremost because one can disable his enemy with less chance of getting

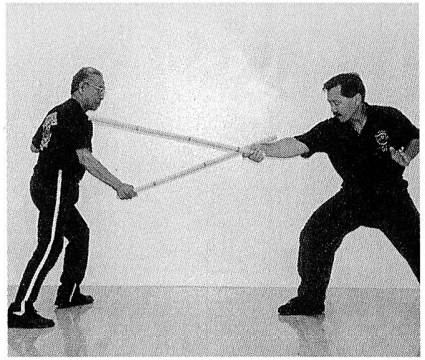


Fig 61

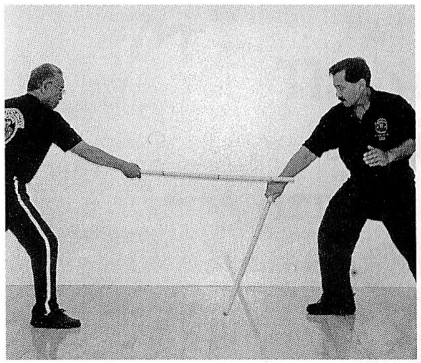


Fig 62

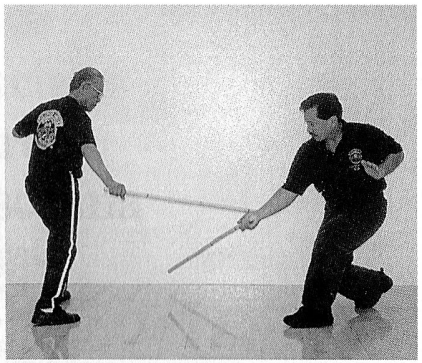


Fig 63

hurt or killed. To employ this style a practitioner must know how to systematically use a longer weapon. A person cannot just swing his longer weapon like a flail. It is an art and therefore must abide with the larga mano science. The practice of stretching far is the daily exercise of a larga mano practitioner (Figs. 61–63).

Through Flaviano's teachings, Grandmaster Leo Giron was able to develop a new system called Giron arnis escrima. The master's fan retains the twenty styles and techniques as written. One with an open mind will wonder about the significance of the opposite side of el abanico del maestro. It is a mystery of the art that only mastery will reveal.

Part Two

The Nucleus of Giron Arnis Escrima

3

The Foundation of an Art

The Clock Method of Teaching

The clock method of teaching is a simple method of communication between instructor and student developed to make specific movements and their intended purpose readily apparent during training. In this method, the attacker is always situated at 12:00 (Fig. 1). All offensive and defensive movements are relative to this position.

To illustrate this teaching method, let us assume that the student stands on point X (the center of the clock) facing 12:00. The instructor tells the student to take a fairly large step to 12:00 with the right foot, making certain that the right toe is pointed at 12:00, that the left foot remains on point X, and that the instep of the left foot is in line with the heel of the right foot. This means the left foot points to 9:00.

To instill in the student the command and proper foot placement, the instructor makes the student repeat the instruction several times. If the student's right toe is pointed to 11:00 or 10:00 the teacher must

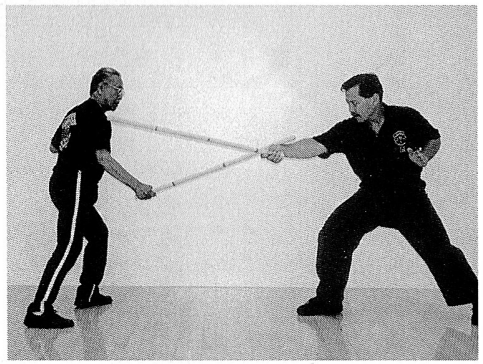


Fig 1

explain the limitation of his reach in such a position, noting that the knee will not allow the body to lean forward. At the same time, if the left foot remains pointed at 12:00, there is no controlling mechanism to prevent the body from falling to either the left or right sides. The instructor then tells the student to take a fairly large step to 11:00 with the left foot. His right foot moves to 9:00, the toe pointing to 3:00, so that the hollow of the right foot is in line with the heel of the left foot.

To continue the drill, the teacher reverses the sequence by telling the student to stand again on point X. He then instructs the student to take a fairly large step to 1:00 with his right foot. The left foot will move to 3:00 with the toe pointing to 9:00.

Repeat the sequence until the student fully absorbs the proper foot placement and knee position. These exercises cover the front section of the floor. One important factor needs to be explained, however. The student taking steps with either the right or left foot from point X must understand that the leading knee must bend forward in order to condition the thigh to carry the heavy weight forward and backward. This training helps execute the rubber band or the elastico-style technique. You must also stress the type and length of weapon used to facilitate proper leaning distance through experience and understanding.

Another example might find the student again standing on point X. He takes a fairly large step with the left foot to 9:00, the right foot then points toward 12:00. He bends his knee to allow maximum reach then reverses his position to face 3:00, by turning on the balls of the feet. Note the change of weight from the left to the right thigh. This drill must be done frequently to accustom the student to the sudden change of gravity which sometimes causes a moment of dizziness.

We have covered the foreground, let us now consider the background. The student remains standing on point X. The instructor instructs him to retreat to 6:00 with the left foot. The right foot remains pointed at 12:00 while the left foot points to 9:00 after retreating to 6:00. The weight of the body shifts from front to rear, alternating which knee bends when the weight transfers either forward or backward.

Distance

Instructions are also given to the student to aid him in automatically assuming the proper distances associated with various styles or situations of combat. These terms include *corto,* meaning close or short (Fig. 2), *tersia,* meaning one third (Fig. 3), *media,* meaning one half (Fig. 4), and *larga,* meaning long (Fig. 5).

It is easy to understand that certain distances determine the action or movements to be used. One cannot exercise his knowledge of long range combat while in close range. In addition, the understanding and

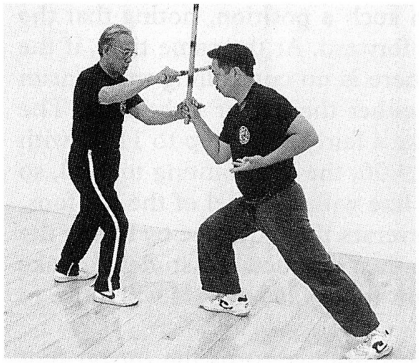
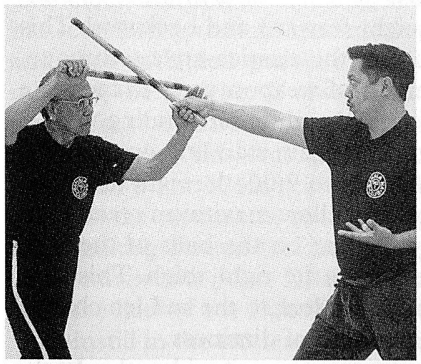


Fig 2

Fig 3



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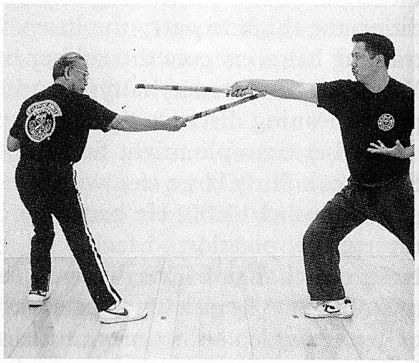


Fig 5

assumption of the proper fighting distance is meant to direct the practitioner to the proper distance required by the terrain, availability of appropriate weapons, or, in rare cases, the change of "pressure" caused by the sudden influx of the enemy in mass combats.

The Eight Original Strikes

During the early development of escrima many of the more experienced practitioners established different striking patterns. The most popular was the eight original strikes, which include the downward forehand strike, downward backhand strike, horizontal forehand strike, horizontal backhand strike, forward thrust, upward forehand strike, upward backhand strike, and center backhand strike. However, after

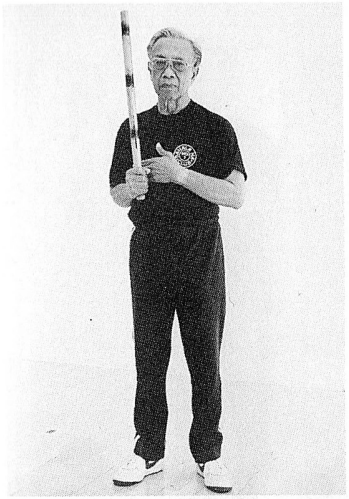


Fig 6

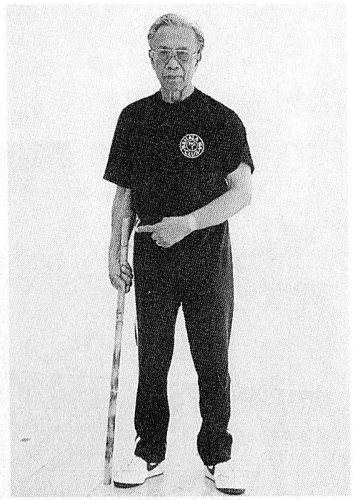


Fig 7

much time and practice, the strikes were distilled into five, became known as the cinco tero, and include the downward forehand strike, downward backhand strike, horizontal forehand strike, horizontal backhand strike, and forward thrust.

Defining the Baston

To play the de fondo style one must either use a bolo or stick that measures at least two feet in length (Fig. 6). This is a standard length so the student can confine himself in a narrow area and take advantage of what little protection he may get from a short stick or weapon.

To play the larga mano style one must use a longer weapon. This weapon should be as long as one can handle, although there is a general size. The proper length of a larga mano weapon is measured by the distance from the floor to the practitioner's hands held at his sides (Fig. 7).

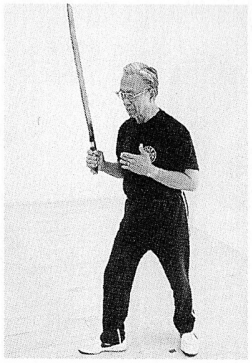


Fig 8

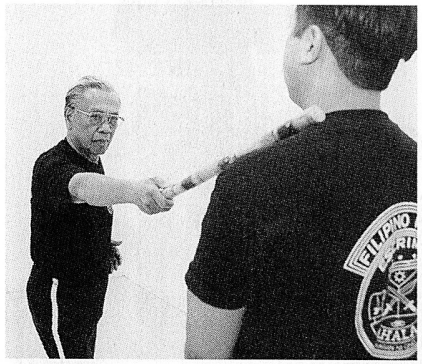


Fig 9

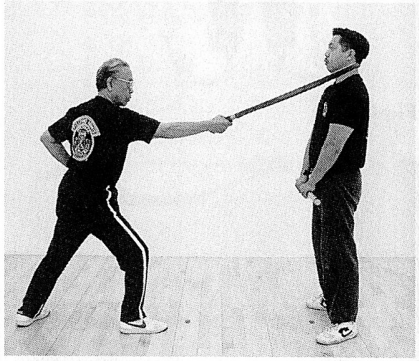


Fig 10

The Attributes of Striking

Be sure not to grip your weapon too tightly when you are fighting. Only grip it tight when making contact on your opponent or with his weapon. Holding a stick is different from holding a *bolo*. The handle of the *bolo* is fixed (Fig. 8). With a stick, you have to learn how to loosen or tighten your grip when needed. Twirling is an exercise used to loosen up your wrist not your grip, so twirl with your wrist only.

When playing Giron arnis escrima, the player must realize that striking with the tip of a weapon (Figs. 9, 10) is more damaging to its target than the middle of the same weapon. Let us break it down into basis mathematics. Starting at the point of rotation is the elbow. The two striking points are the middle and the tip or end of a twenty-four-inch stick. Since the velocity is greater and the striking area smaller, striking with the tip of the weapon creates more damage and is thus preferred.

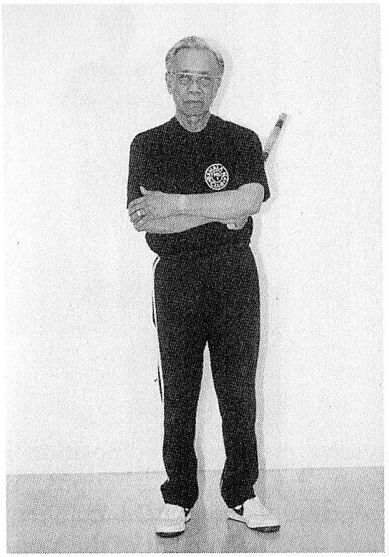


Fig 11

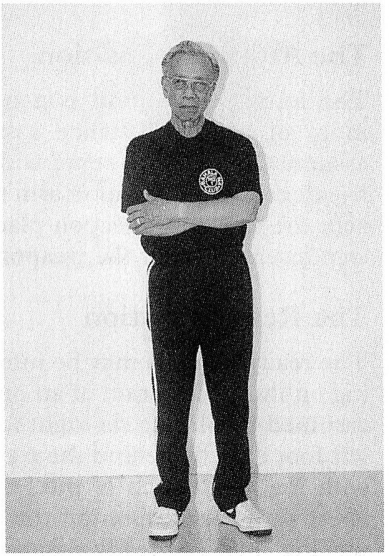


Fig 12

The Natural Position

The natural position is assumed when you are casually standing in a class receiving instruction, visiting with other students, or in a social setting with other people. This position is natural and assumed by standing with your feet pointing forward a shoulder's width apart, with the palm of your left hand held to your right side, covering your rib cage, and your left forearm resting on your stomach. Your right hand and arm overlap your left forearm, and your weapon is held vertically alongside the outside of your left triceps (Fig. 11). This position may also be assumed without a weapon (Fig. 12). Taking a natural position simply means standing at ease.

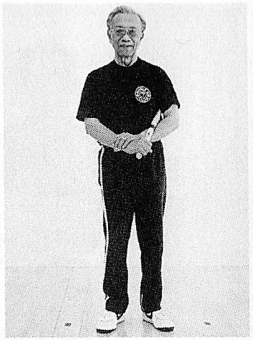


Fig 13

The Attention Position

The attention position is a non-aggressive posture. This position is more of a formal stance assumed while receiving instructions. To assume this position, stand with heels together and feet held at a forty-five degree angle, weapon arm relaxed and directly in front of the stomach, the tip of the weapon placed under the left arm pit, with the left arm inserted under the weapon, grabbing the right wrist (Fig. 13).

The Ready Position

The ready position may be interpreted in many different ways depending on the anticipation of an opponent's aggressiveness. The position is assumed by placing the right foot straight ahead pointing to 12:00, the left foot directly behind the right foot at 6:00, and the right heel in line with the inside arch of the left foot. The left hand is held across the chest with the weapon on the right side of the body with tip pointing up (Fig. 14). The ready position can also have several different weapon arm positions (Figs. 15, 16), as determined by your opponents action or attack.

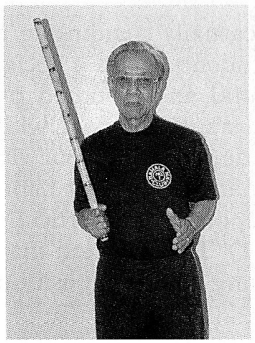


Fig 14

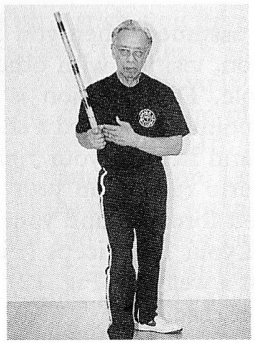


Fig 15

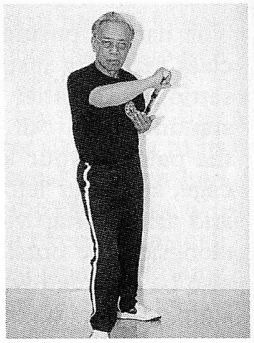


Fig 16

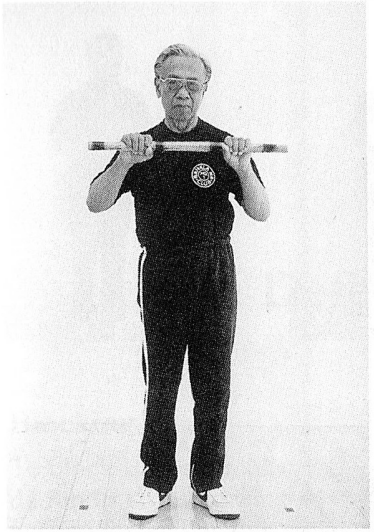


Fig 17

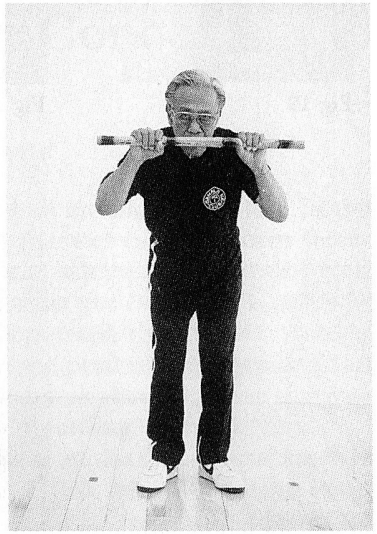


Fig 18

Salutation With a Weapon

The formal salutation with a weapon in a regular class is done by placing the feet a shoulder's width apart, holding both ends of the weapon, allowing about five or six inches to protrude from each end, bringing the middle of the weapon close to the face with the elbows held close to the body (Fig. 17). Bow to waist level to give the proper respect to the head of the class (Fig. 18). The salute is then mutually returned.

This manner of saluting not only shows the proper respect to whoever deserves it, but offers a fairly wide view of the surrounding area, as the eyes can see above the baston. In addition, this is a safe position since the baston can block sudden kicks to the face, strikes from either side, and downward blows. At the same time, a disarming technique can be effectively executed by hooking and then breaking the attacker's wrist if he doesn't submit.

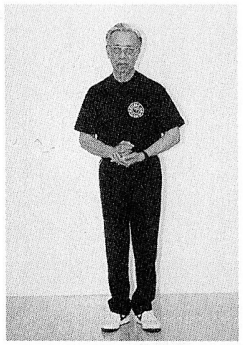


Fig 19

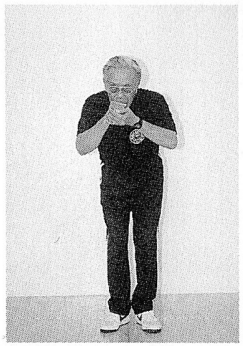


Fig 20

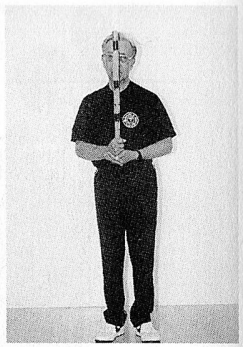


Fig 21

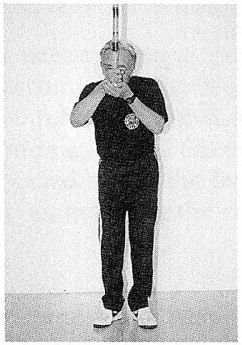


Fig 22

Salutation Without a Weapon

The formal salutation without a weapon whether in a class or as a visitor in another club, is done by placing the heels together with feet pointing at a forty-five degree angle. The left hand is cupped and the right hand is in a fist resting in the cup of the left hand (Fig. 19). Next, raise the left and right hands up with the elbows in front of the mouth (Fig. 20). Bend at your mid-section to give the proper respect to the head of the class or to a fellow student. The salute is then mutually returned.

During exhibitions, a practitioner with a weapon can make a few gestures in the air with his weapon, then salute his fellow practitioner. The practitioner will terminate his salute with his weapon by pointing to the sky (Fig. 21), then drop the hilt (or lower end) of the weapon into his left palm cupped to indicate that he will not shed his friend's blood, and place his left hand and his baston to his lips for a brotherly kiss as he bows down to render due respect (Fig. 22). Beware of weapons pointed to the ground, which indicates a fight to the death.

4

Basic Defensive Concepts

Blocking

To block is to stop, obstruct, hinder, or halt an oncoming blow. In the de fondo style blocking techniques find themselves in the form force-against-force. For this reason, the material selected to construct your weapon is of the utmost importance—it must not easily break, splinter, or chip. In an actual skirmish this is not important. However, for training purposes sticks or clubs made of rattan are preferred as they fray but do not splinter or chip. A sliver in the finger or skin can cause discomfort and may delay one's training, hence retarding one's progress.

Blocking techniques are employed to protect the four central areas of the body: the front, left, and right sides of the mid-section, the lower extremities of the body, and the upper body. The four areas are protected with the use of six types of blocks known as the frontal (Fig. 1), roof (Fig. 2), cross (Fig. 3), wing (Fig. 4), inside (Fig. 5), and sweep (Fig. 6). Blocking techniques are almost always followed by either a parry, deflection, evasion, or hand-checking maneuver, as described below.

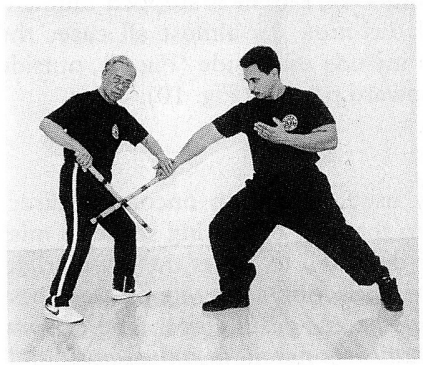


Fig 1

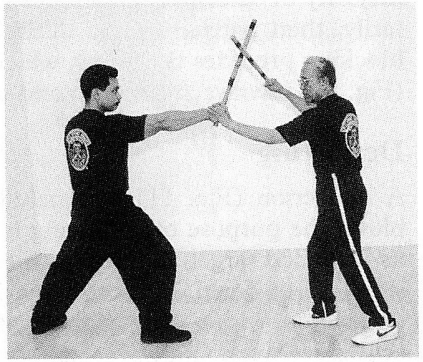


Fig 2

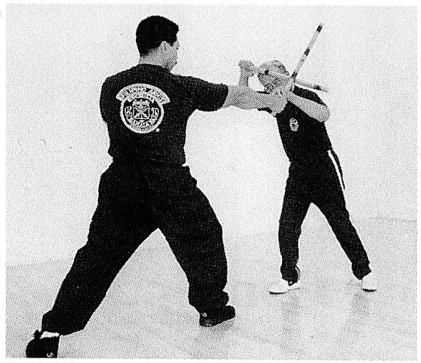


Fig 3

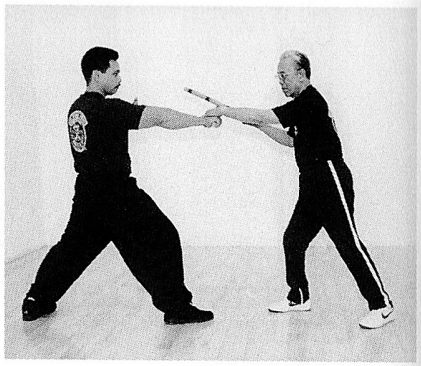


Fig 4

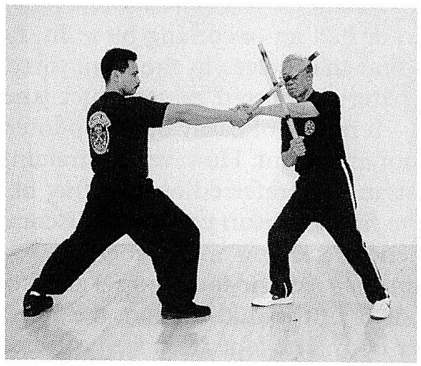


Fig 5

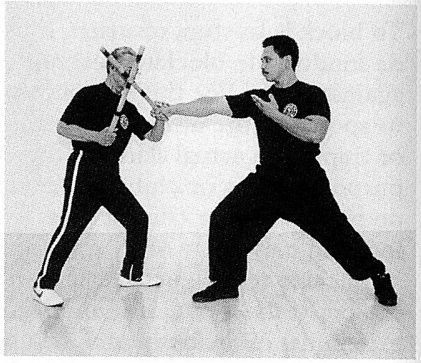


Fig 6

Parrying

A parry wards off or diverts the course of an oncoming blow. In the majority of defensive techniques in this art, a blow is stopped momentarily, then parried in the desired direction. In almost all cases the blocking precedes the parry, which include the inside (Fig. 7), outside (Fig. 8), downward (Fig. 9), and upward parries (Fig. 10).

Deflecting

A deflection (Fig. 11) is generally used against an oncoming direct blow. The purpose of deflecting is to force an oncoming strike to miss its intended target. A thrust can be deflected to either the left or right sides, up or down. In most cases the deflection serves its purpose best when done with a twist of the body. In some cases, depending on how aggressive your opponent is, strategic footwork may be employed.

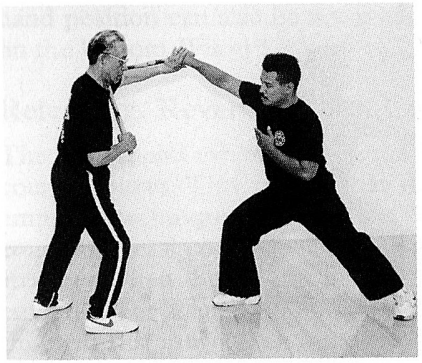


Fig 7

Fig 8

Fig 9

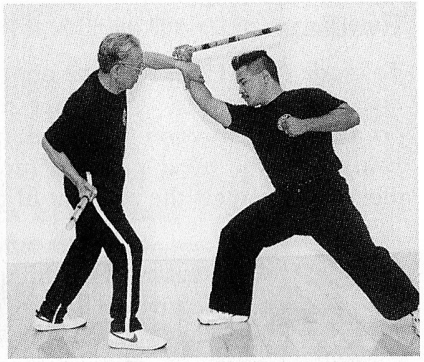


Fig 10

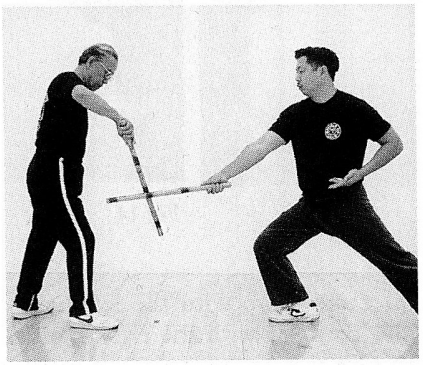


Fig 11

However, when taking the ultimate stand where foot movement is impossible, the body twist will suffice when deflecting an opponent's weapon, while at the same time displaying the graceful motion of the art.

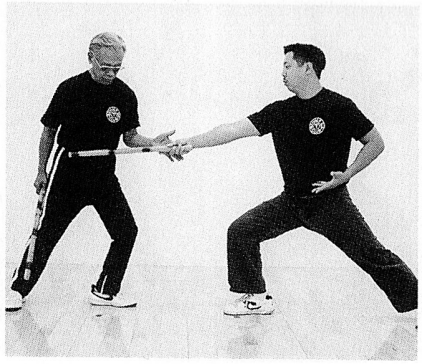


Fig 12

Evading

To evade (Fig. 12) is to move out of the path of an oncoming blow. This does not require the assistance of a weapon, although for maximum protection an evasion is best done in conjunction with a deflection. Evasion is the most graceful motion in the art of escrima, for this movement reveals the amount of training a player has.

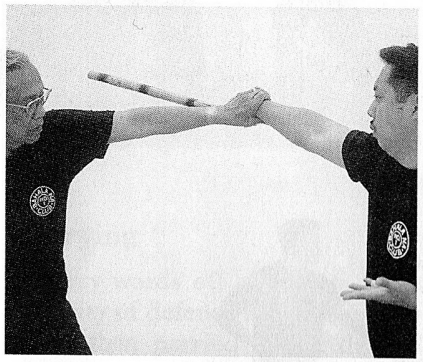


Fig 13

Fig 14

Hand Checking

Checking techniques are done with the left hand if one is holding a weapon in the right hand, or with the right hand if one has a weapon in his left hand. In Giron arnis escrima one must always avail his non weapon hand ready to check or grab. There are many windows of opportunity for one to continue this flow into wrist locks, arm locks, arm bars, breaks, and so on. To execute a check or c-clamp properly, fingers need to be closed and tightly wrapped around the top of an opponent's arm, with the thumb extended to the bottom (Fig. 13). The hand position can also be reversed, with the thumb on top and fingers on the bottom (Fig. 14).

Releasing, Reversing, and Counter Blocking

The term *contra sombra* implies the release of holds and the reversals of counter blows. This means that during an encounter the *escrimador* employs techniques of counter blocking, counter reversing, and counter releasing. Sych skills are generally exhibited during demonstrations when the art has been well rehearsed, and reflects the estilo entablado, or stage style of playing. On the other hand, in real combat this will depend on how good the players are. There have been no known serious combats that have extended their releasing, reversals, and counter blocking beyond a second strike, which generally ends an engagement. The mastery of such skills reflects the estila matador, or killer style.

The Spanish term *sombra* by itself means shade or shadow. The common example of providing shade is the use of the *payong* or umbrella, which is also the name of the overhead block. One may remove or brush off the other's "umbrella" (block) in order to sneak in a blow. In turn, the defender will remedy this by releasing himself from the impending danger by also reversing the situation.

The contra sombra technique is taught after graduating from the system, but only to a selected and entrusted student. The grandmaster may have chosen one out of a graduating class to become his assistant, to whom he imparts such techniques. These among a few are called "the master's secrets," as discussed in the pervious chapters.

5

Preparation for Training

Escrima as Sport and Art

Where there is sport, there must be a sportsman. Similarly, where there is art, there must be an artist. While escrima is identified with the Filipinos as a system of combat, a line is often drawn separating the objectives of the sportsman and artist. The sportsman is after his trophy, while the artist is looking for tremendous ovation and must move his audience. The sportsman is not concerned with how he wins, while the artist is particular about the many intricate parts of the art and is meticulous about his performance.

In all, both sportsman and artist share must common ground. There must be spectators for both, as it is not much of an art or sport if no one else will share the thrill of success. The sportsman needs to have a field in which to compete, while the artist a stage on which to perform. Trying to be both is the main goal among practitioners of Giron arnis escrima.

Training the Mind, Heart, and Body

Escrima is a sport as well as an art of self-defense. In order to perform aesthetically, skill and agility are the two most essential factors. Continuous training shapes the mind to appreciate fairness and honesty and reject poor sportsmanship. It teaches the student conscientious performance and to always strive to perform with the highest degree of discipline. Training such as this honors the memory of our forefathers, and this is innately beautiful.

Training is in the triangle of wisdom, section of intellect. The triangle of wisdom is a symbol of divinity, the triangle of God. God has full control of the universe, as well as the power that creates man, the power that saves the entire human race from mass destruction, and the power to preserve man's soul after his material existence. In the language of Christianity, we name this Trinity, this Divine family of God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Training is in the circle of eternity, section of redemption. If we believe that God resides in eternity and that eternity has no beginning or end, so is the geometrical figure of the circle. The circle goes on and on without end. The circle is the symbol of eternity.

Training is in the square of matter, section of power. The geometrical figure of the square will best suit as an example of the human race. The square figure is the symbol of matter, which constitutes the earth that we live on. Without matter, there is no earth. Matter provides beauty and it is in matter that reflects the noble creation of God. And man is the noblest of all his creation.

The heart must be trained to persevere, to be tolerant, and to forgive. It must be capable of love, fidelity, and compassion; be able to withstand the many challenges of life without faltering; and hold no grudges in the heart against another. This training is in the circle of divinity, section of emotion.

Every muscle of the body moves while practicing the art, thus stimulating the circulatory system. Hard work gradually develops endurance which is necessary in physical fitness and to achieve the maximum efficiency in performing the art. Such physical fitness also enables the practitioner to resist various threats to health. There is also growth of the muscle structure, and a general improvement of the shape of the body which in turn makes it pleasing to the eye. This training is in the square of matter, section of power.

Warm-Up Exercises

Prior to the start of each training session, the student of escrima is run through a few warm-up drills to loosen and stretch the muscles and body. By taking time to warm up properly, the chances of injury as a result of pulled muscles will be greatly reduced. Several warm-up exercises are described below.

Twirling Exercise

Stand in a ready position with the right foot facing 12:00 and the left foot at 6:00 (Fig. 1). Begin with the weapon on the right side of your body and initiate a number one strike (Fig. 2). Circle through and around until the weapon has made a complete circle (Figs. 3–5). This twirling exercise can also be done in reverse, and on the left side. Remember to twirl with the wrist. Note that the first time you begin twirling you must start out with a lighter weapon; using a heavy weapon may cause damage to the wrist and forearm.

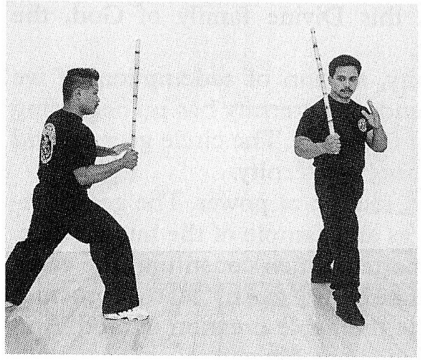


Fig 1

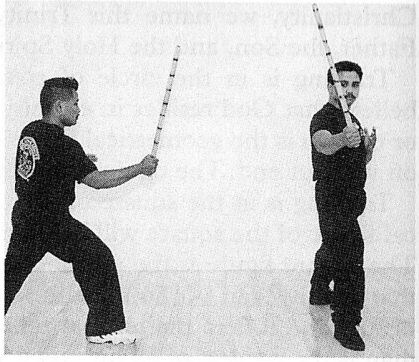


Fig 2

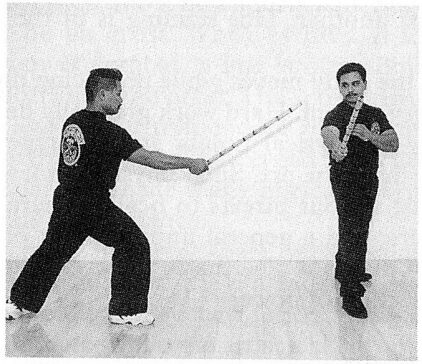


Fig 3

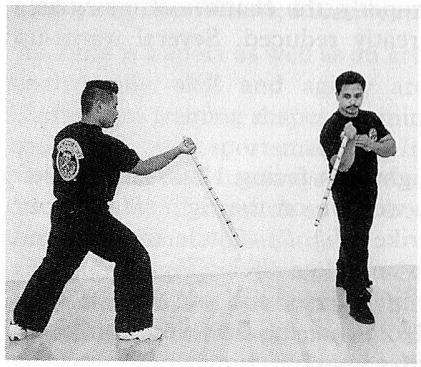


Fig 4

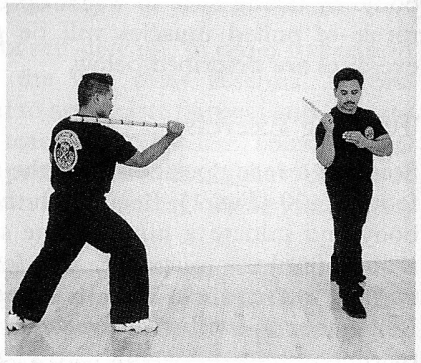


Fig 5

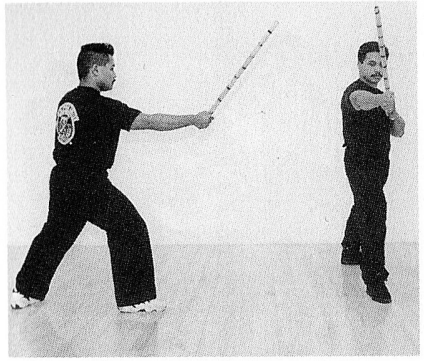


Fig 6

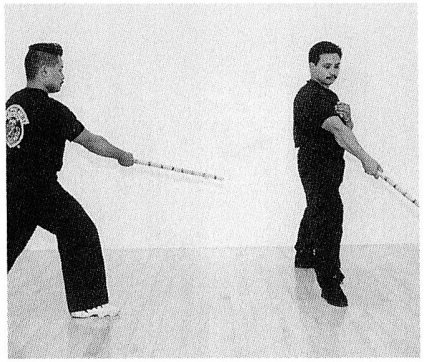


Fig 7

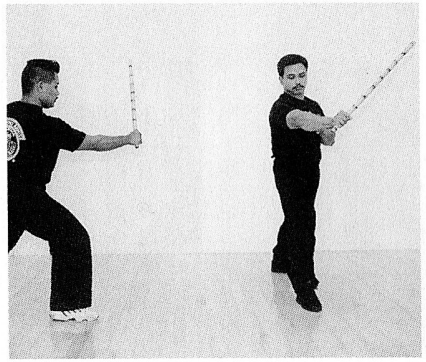


Fig 8

Figure-8 Exercise

Stand in a ready position with the right foot facing 12:00 and the left foot at 6:00 (Fig. 6). Begin with the weapon on the right side of your body and initiate a number one strike (Fig. 7). Circle through and around, ending with a number two strike (Fig. 8). Continue by repeating this combination, which finds you doing a figure-8 motion. This exercise can also be done in reverse, and on the left side. Repeat the forward and reverse figure-8 several times each, always remembering to strike with the top six-inches of the weapon.

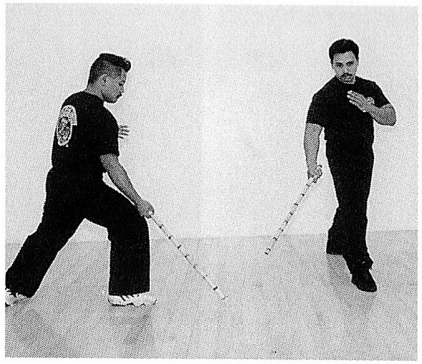


Fig 9

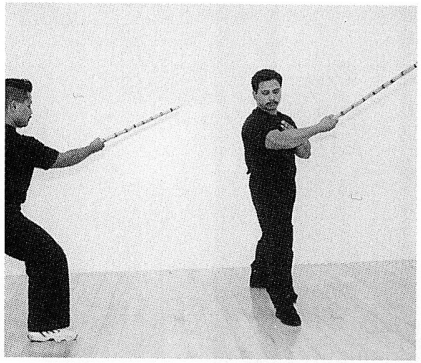


Fig 10

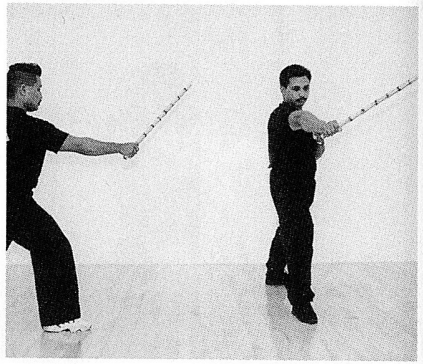


Fig 11

Strike Eleven to Strike Two Exercise

Stand in a ready position with the right foot facing 12:00 and the left foot at 6:00 (Fig. 9). With the stick held on the right side of the body, strike diagonally upward to the left shoulder (Fig. 10). Return the strike with a diagonal downward strike to the right side (Fig. 11). Repeat this exercise several times.

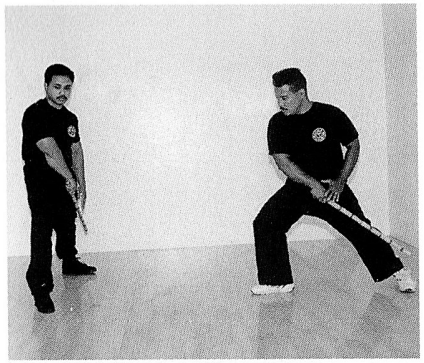


Fig 12

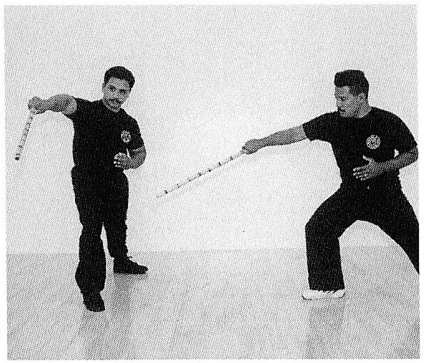


Fig 13

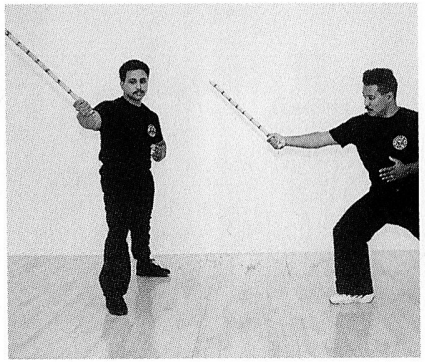


Fig 14

Strike Nine to Strike One Exercise

Stand in a ready position with the right foot facing 12:00 and the left foot at 6:00 (Fig. 12). Begin with the weapon held next to your left thigh, and strike in a diagonal upward motion to the right shoulder (Fig. 13). Return the strike with a diagonal downward motion to the left hip (Fig. 14). You will end up in the same position as you began. Repeat this exercise several times.

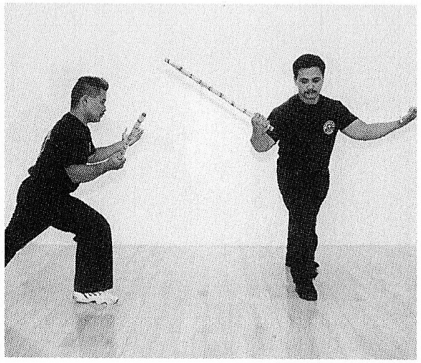


Fig 15

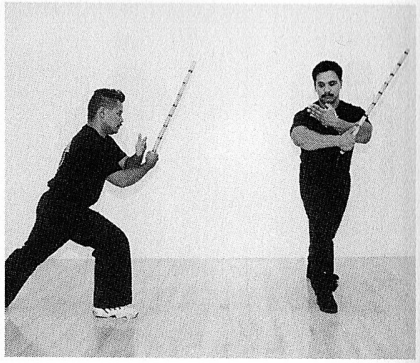


Fig 16

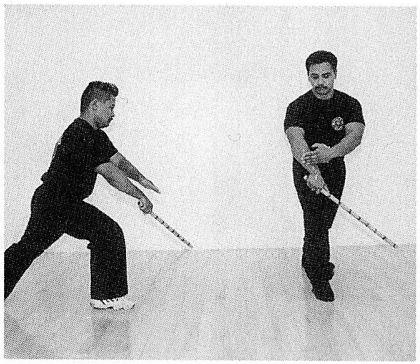


Fig 17

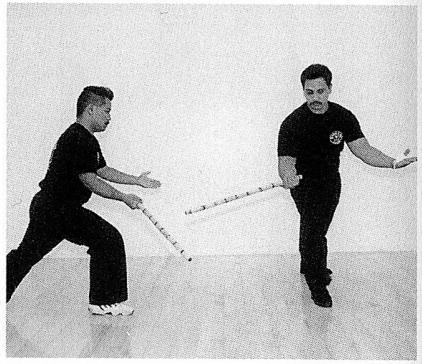


Fig 18

Fanning Exercise

Stand in a ready position the right foot facing 12:00, the left foot at 6:00, the chin over the right knee, and the right knee over the right toe (Fig. 15). Begin the strike in a counter clockwise motion (Fig. 16). Rotate the left hand down to the outside of the weapon hand in a clockwise motion (Fig. 17). The weapon hand and left hand will continue full circle, ending in an upward position (Fig. 18). Repeat this exercise several times.

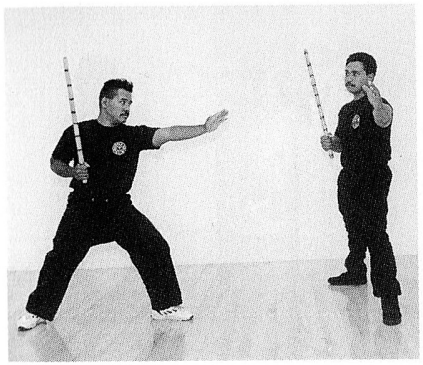
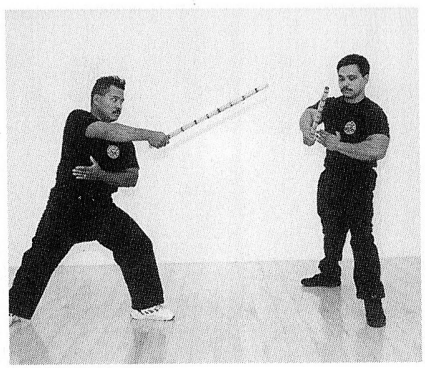


Fig 19



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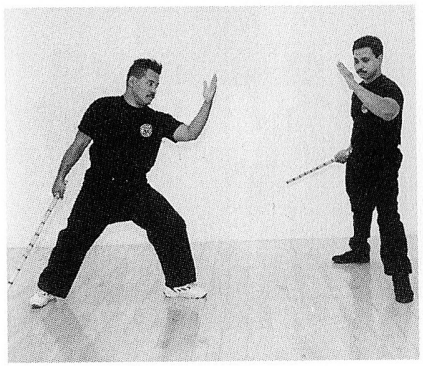


Fig 21

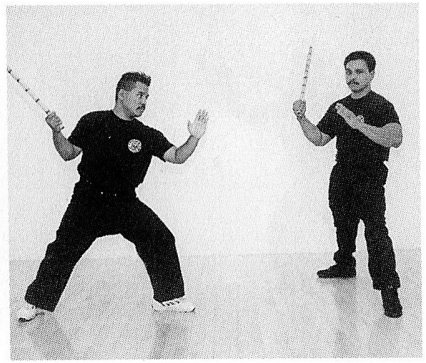


Fig 22

Windmill Exercise

Stand in a ready position with the left foot facing 12:00, the right foot at 6:00, the left hand extending in front, and the right weapon-arm chambered to the back (Fig. 19). Strike with the weapon in a counter-clockwise, circular motion (Fig. 20). Extend the left hand as the weapon is moving to the downward position (Fig. 21). The weapon hand and left hand will complete a full circle (Fig. 22). When done in reverse, this exercise is called the reverse windmill exercise. Repeat this exercise several times.

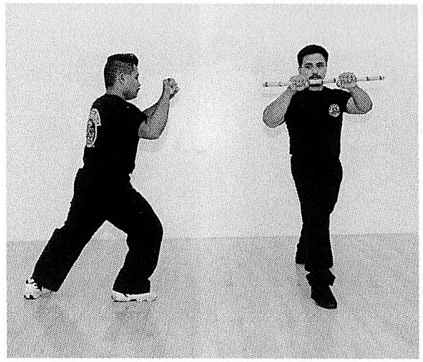


Fig 23

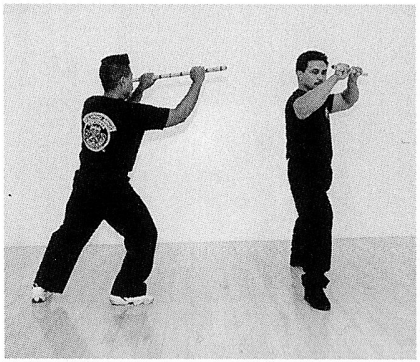


Fig 24

Fig 25

Horizontal Stroking Exercise

Stand in a ready position with the right foot facing 12:00 and the left foot at 6:00. Hold your weapon at both ends, allowing about five or six inches of stick to protrude, with elbows tucked in (Fig. 23). Strike first to the left temple with the right butt of the weapon (Fig. 24). Strike second to the right temple with the left butt of the weapon (Fig. 25). Repeat these strikes and be more aware of the twisting exercise of the hip as you progress.

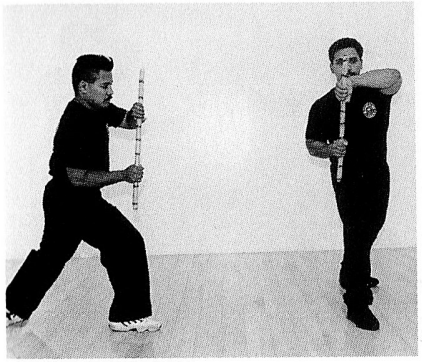


Fig 26

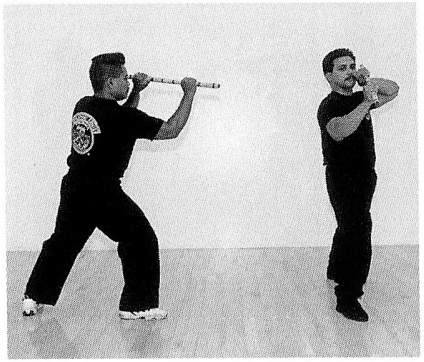


Fig 27

Fig 28

Vertical Stroking Exercise

Stand in a ready position with the right foot facing 12:00 and the left foot at 6:00. Hold the weapon at both ends, allowing about five to six inches of stick to protrude from each end, with your right elbow tucked in (Fig. 26). Strike first to the chin in an upward motion with the right butt of the weapon (Fig. 27). Strike second to the chin in an upward motion with the left butt of the weapon (Fig. 28). Repeat this combination and be aware of the excessive twisting of the hips and knees. Since ligaments can be pulled and causes severe pain, be sure to gradually increase the speed and pressure of the movements.

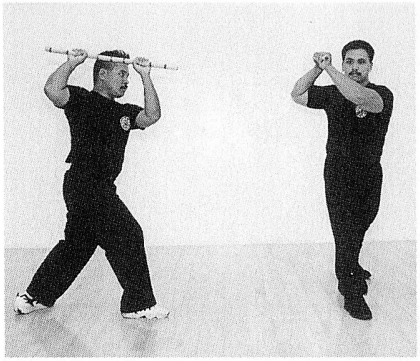


Fig 29

Fig 30

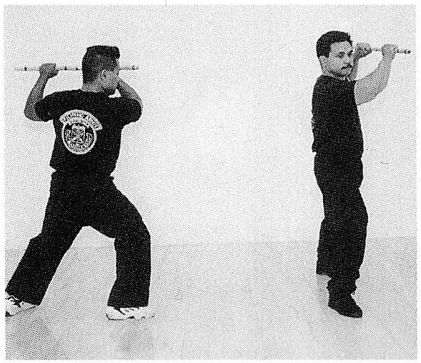


Fig 31

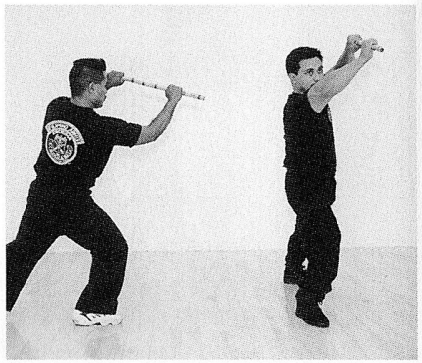


Fig 32

Jabbing Exercise

Stand in a ready position with the right foot facing 12:00 and the left foot at 6:00. Hold the weapon at both ends allowing about five to six inches of stick to protrude from each end (Fig. 29). Begin on your right side and hit to the left side of the face in a jabbing or thrusting motion, then rake in a downward motion (Fig. 30). Follow through and chamber your weapon to your left side (Fig. 31). Strike second with the right butt starting on the left side of your opponent's face and rake through to the right side (Fig. 32). Repeat these strikes and be constantly aware of the possible injury to the hips and knees that may arise from improper twisting.

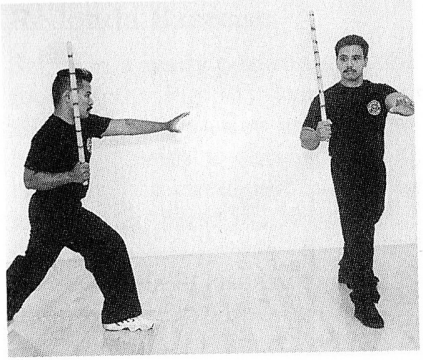


Fig 33

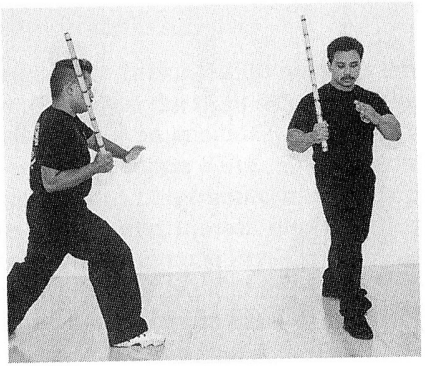


Fig 34

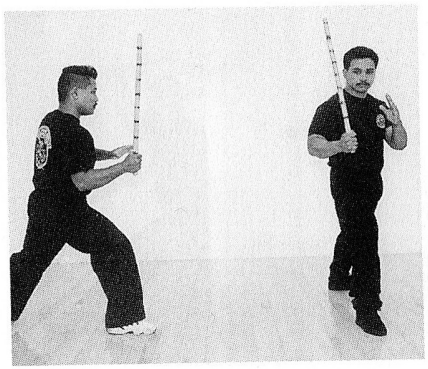


Fig 35

Snap Hitting Exercise

Stand in a ready position with the right foot facing 12:00 and the left foot at 6:00 (Fig. 33). Starting the weapon from the right side, strike with a snap hit to the number one striking area, by using the wrist in a snapping motion (Fig. 34) and retracting (Fig. 35). Repeat this exercise. This exercise should also be done using the remaining five trikes. Be aware of the weight of the weapon as it may damage your wrist or forearm, if too heavy. So start out with a light weapon.

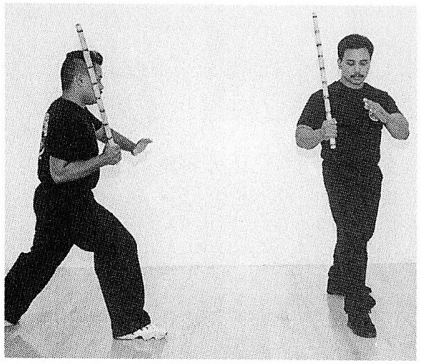


Fig 36

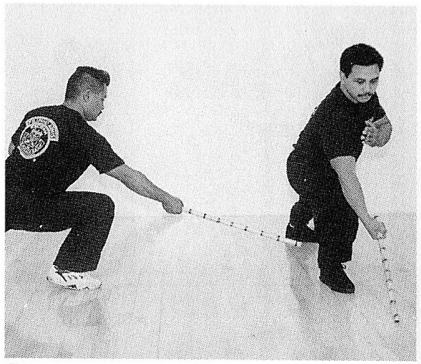


Fig 37

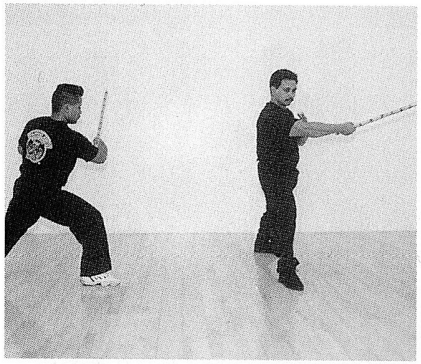


Fig 38

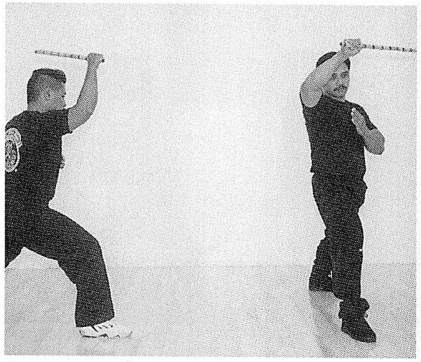


Fig 39

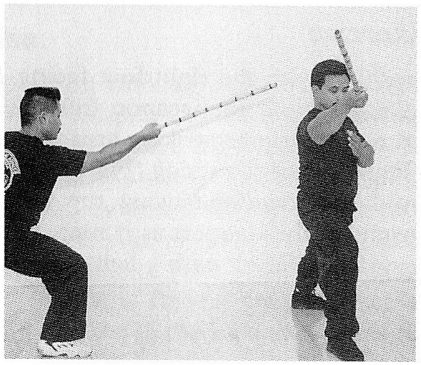


Fig 40

Redonda Exercise

Stand in a ready position with the right foot facing 12:00 and the left foot at 6:00 (Fig. 36). Starting the weapon from the right side, bend the right knee to get as low as possible, and strike to an imaginary opponent's left ankle with a circular motion of the weapon (Fig. 37). Follow through in a circular motion over your head to generate momentum and power (Figs. 38, 39). Continue the circular motion and hit your opponents left temple (Fig. 40). Repeat this circular striking motion several times. It also helps to condition the right leg and the hip joints. This exercise can also be done in many different patterns. Be aware of the weight to the knee. Start slowly, then increases your speed.

Part Three
Estilo de Fondo

6

The Twelve Strikes of Estilo de Fondo

Discipline of Delivery

In Giron arnis escrima the numbered series of strikes are not only related to the kind of attacks being delivered, but to the area of the body toward which the strikes are aimed. The series of twelve strikes depicted and described hereafter are from the de fondo style. It should be noted, however, that there are various numbering systems used within the whole of the Giron system, as found in the individual styles.

While hard, light, fast, and slow strikes are used within the de fondo style, there are appropriate times and places for them. How a type of blow is delivered is known as its discipline of delivery. A full swing of the arm, especially if the weapon is of considerable weight, will inflict much more damage than a controlled swing. However, heavy blows are more difficult to control and slower to redirect when a return stroke is needed. A good rule to follow is that your arm must not go beyond the width of your body when striking. There is always the exception of course, such as when the weapon is blocked, which then forces it to make a circular motion to hit another target. In many instances, especially when using light but fast strikes, it is more advantageous to never swing or glide beyond the full length of your opponent's weapon. Since the return is quick for immediate blocking. The more disciplined escrimadors, notably, hold their elbow close to their side and seldom fully extend their arms.

The experienced de fondo practitioner needs to distinguish between the various numbering systems in Giron arnis escrima. Mixing numbers and their characteristics is not advisable. The instructor conducting class must not confuse the students. In addition, the practitioner must keep in mind that while we train with a stick, it actually represents the

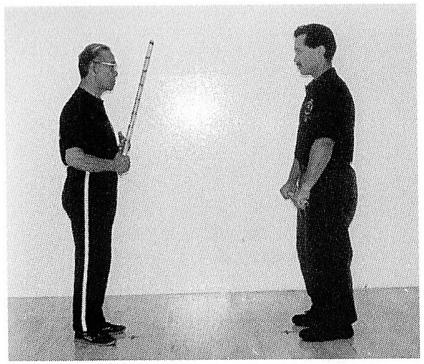


Fig 1

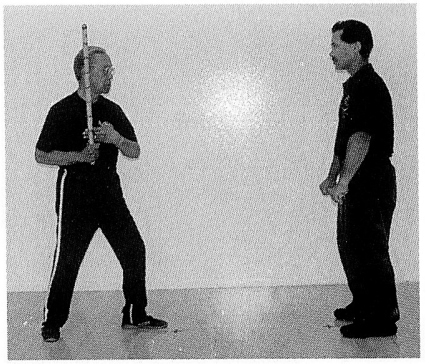


Fig 2

bladed *bolo.* One must therefore distinguish between the back of the blade and the cutting edge when holding the stick, especially during combat drills.

Analysis of the Twelve Strikes

Following are descriptions and illustrations of the deliveries of the twelve de fondo strikes. In a traditional setting, the twelve strikes are delivered by following a series of commands spoken by the instructor. In a combative setting, however, they are simply delivered in continuous motions, as determined by the combat situation. The following strikes are taught and practiced using a three to five step command-and-delivery system, composed of a preparation, ready position, and final delivery of the strike.

Strike Number One

Command: "Prepare for strike number one." Stand in a ready position with the left or empty hand crossed behind the stick, with the back of the hand touching the weapon. The weapon tip should be slightly higher than the head (Fig. 1).

Command: "Ready." Step back with the right foot to 6:00, while maintaining the chamber position (Fig. 2).

Command: "Strike." Step forward with the right foot to 12:00, adjust the left foot to 6:00, and strike to the base of the opponent's neck (Fig. 3).

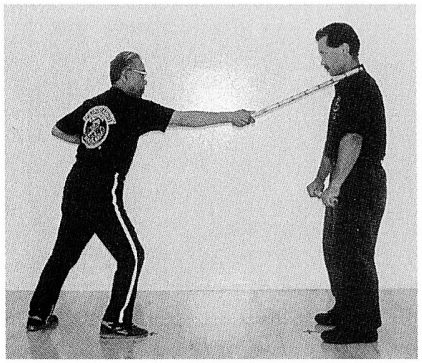


Fig 3

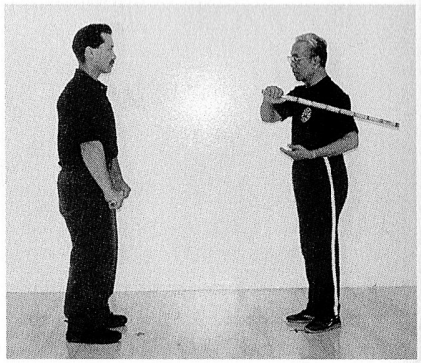


Fig 4

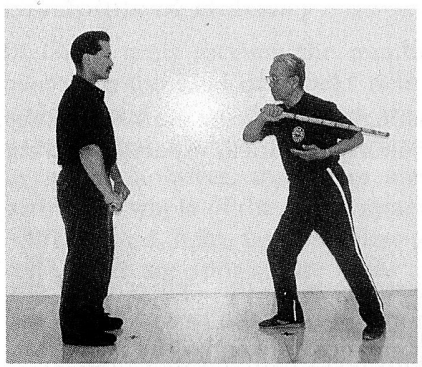


Fig 5

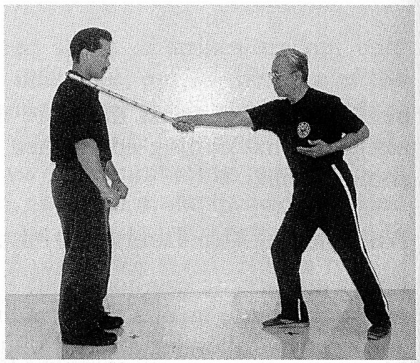


Fig 6

Strike Number Two

Command: "Prepare for strike number two." Stand in a ready position with the stick held across your waist and the left hand touching its tip (Fig. 4).

Command: "Ready." Step forward with the right foot to 12:00, while keeping your body square to the target, and adjust your left foot to 6:00. Hold the weapon diagonally against your left triceps. The left hand, holding a dagger, points to the opponent's mid-section (Fig. 5).

Command: "Strike." Strike to the base of the right side of the opponent's neck (Fig. 6).

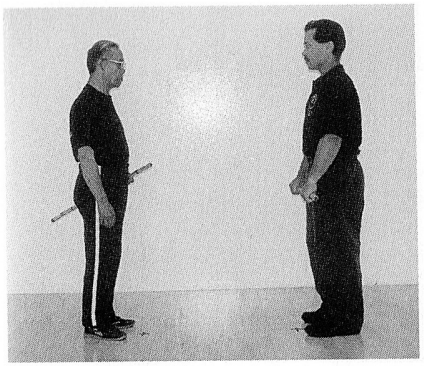


Fig 7

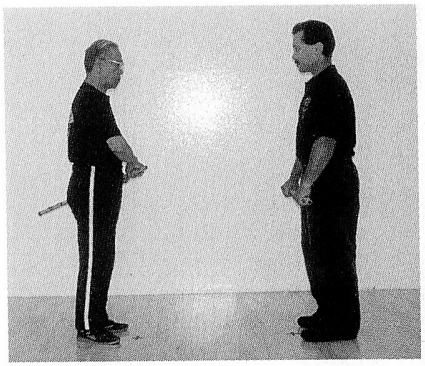


Fig 8

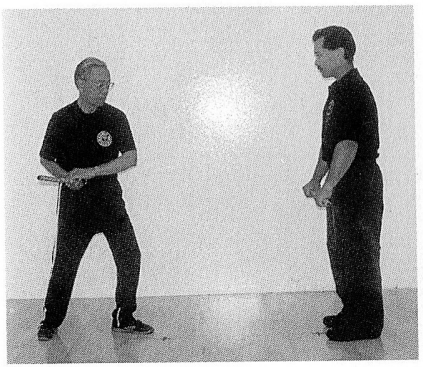


Fig 9

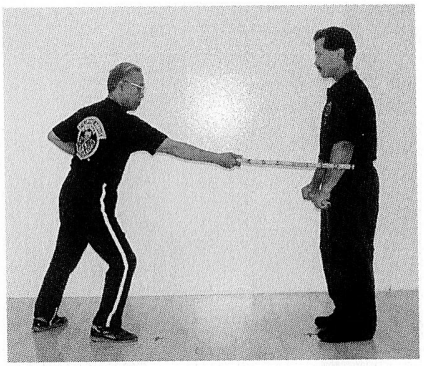


Fig 10

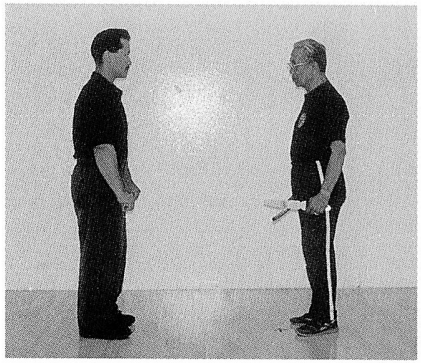
Strike Number Three

Command: "Prepare for strike number three." Stand in a ready position with the left hand holding the stick, acting as a scabbard (Fig. 7).

Command: "Ready." Place your right hand on the handle of the weapon (Fig. 8).

Command: "Draw." Draw the weapon out of the left hand and step backward with the right foot to 6:00 (Fig. 9).

Command: "Strike." Step forward with the right foot to 12:00, adjust the left foot to 6:00, and horizontally strike the left side of the opponent's waist (Fig. 10).



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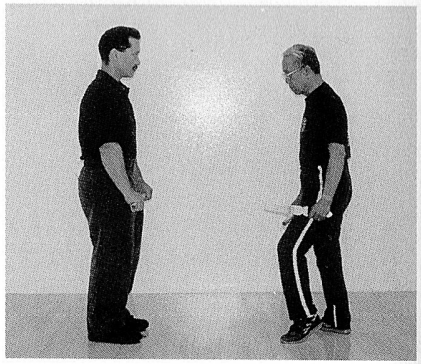

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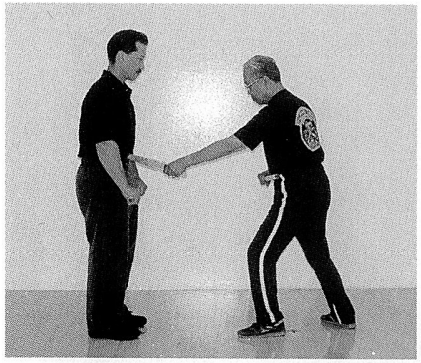


Fig 13

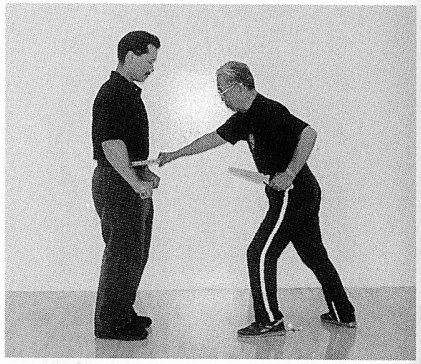


Fig 14

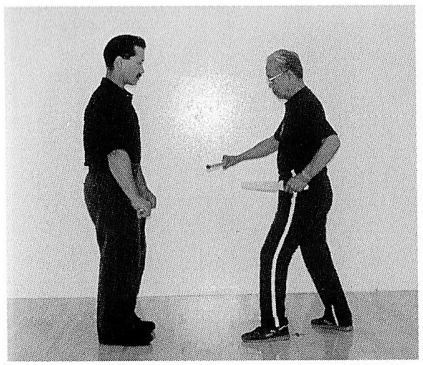
Strike Number Four (light)

Command: "Prepare for strike number four, light." Stand in a ready position with the stick held across your waist and the dagger resting on its tip (Fig. 11).

Command: "Ready." Elevate your left heel, with your weight resting on the ball of the left foot, and chamber your stick horizontally in front of your waist with the dagger placed on top of it (Fig. 12).

Command: "Jab." Step forward with the left foot to 12:00, adjust the right foot to 6:00, and jab with the dagger to the navel (Fig. 13).

Command: "Strike." Retract your dagger to your left side and strike with the stick to the opponent's mid-section (Fig. 14), then slightly retract the stick (Fig. 15).



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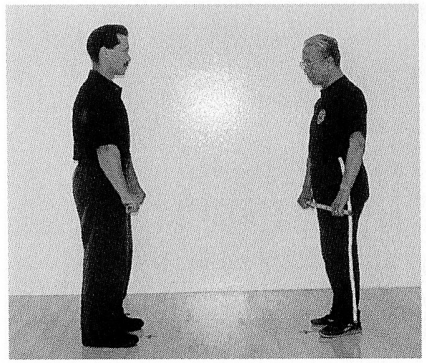


Fig 16

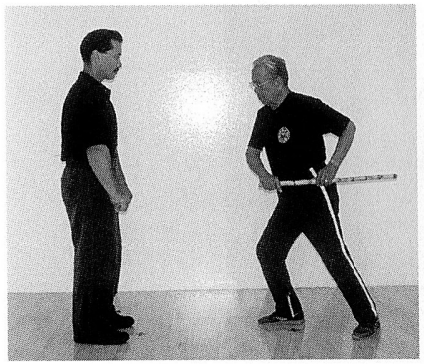


Fig 17

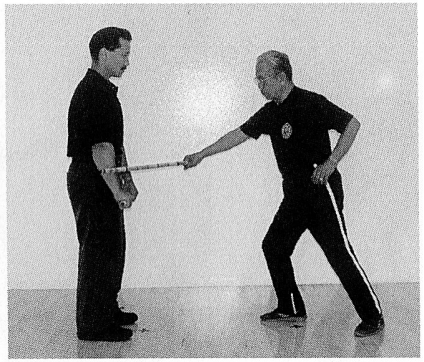


Fig 18

Strike Number Four (heavy)

Command: "Prepare for number four, heavy." Stand in a ready position with the stick held across your waist and the dagger resting on its tip (Fig. 16).

Command: "Ready." Take a right foot lead to 12:00, the left foot to 6:00, with the weapon hand cross it over to the left side with a horizontal delivery the opposite hand palm up (Fig. 17).

Command: "Strike." Direct a backhand strike to the right side of the opponent's waist (Fig. 18).

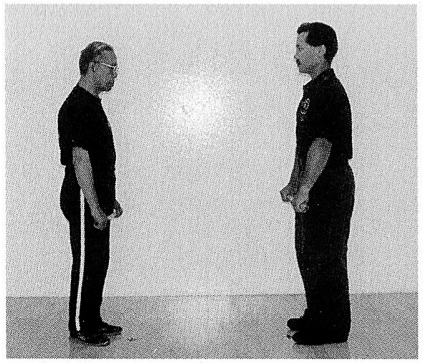
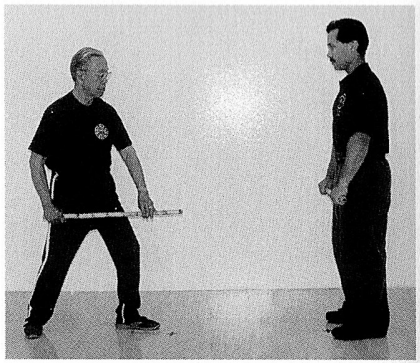


Fig 19



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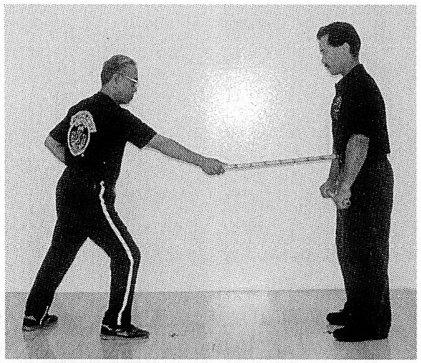


Fig 21

Strike Number Five

Command: "Prepare for strike number five." Stand in a ready position with the stick held across your waist and the dagger resting on its tip (Fig. 19).

Command: "Ready." Step back with the right foot to 6:00, hold the stick pointing forward, and place the palm of your left hand on the end of the stick (Fig. 20).

Command: "Strike." Step with the right foot to 12:00 and thrust forward to the opponent's navel (Fig. 21).

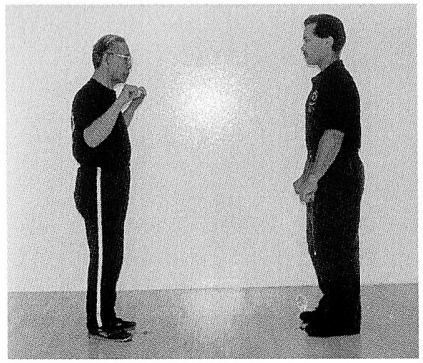
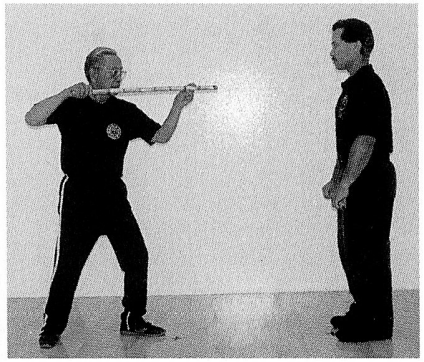


Fig 22



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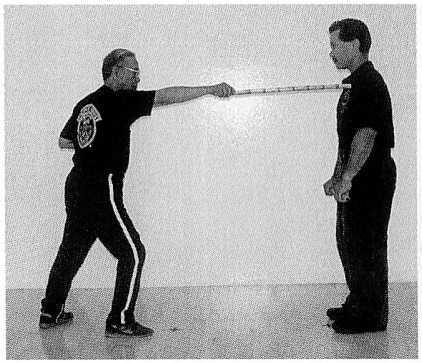


Fig 24

Strike Number Six

Command: "Prepare for strike number six." Stand in a ready position with both hands held shoulder's height, the middle of the weapon under chin, and the back of the hand facing your face with elbows tucked in (Fig. 22).

Command: "Ready." Step back with the right foot to 6:00, adjust the right hand to the right side of the face, and align the tip of the weapon with the left hand pointed at your opponent (Fig. 23).

Command: "Strike." Step forward with the right foot to 12:00, adjust the left foot to 6:00, and thrust to the left shoulder with a downward motion (Fig. 24).

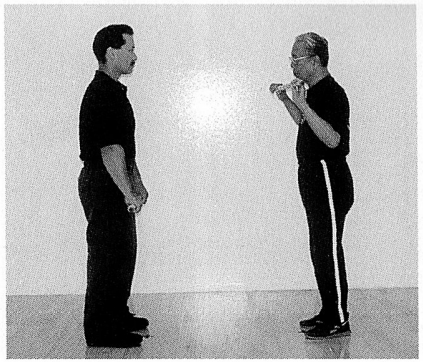
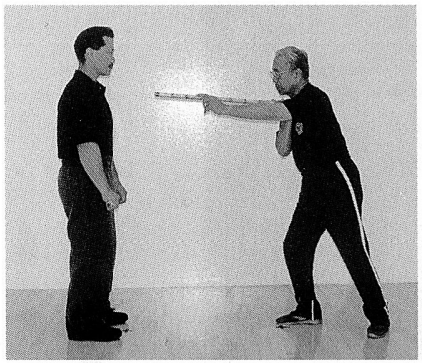


Fig 25



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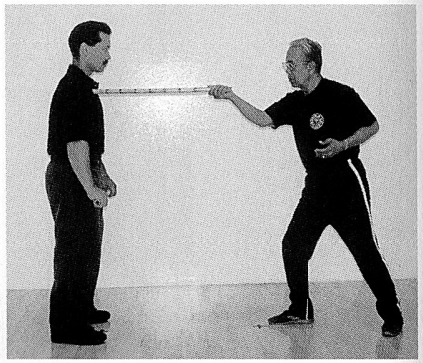


Fig 27

Strike Number Seven

Command: "Prepare for strike number seven." Stand in a ready position with both hands held shoulder's height, the middle of the weapon under chin, and the back of the hand facing your face with elbows tucked in (Fig. 25).

Command: "Ready." Step forward with the right foot to 12:00, adjust the left foot to 6:00. Invert the hilt and rest it on the left shoulder, using the left hand to guide the stick (Fig. 26).

Command: "Strike." Slightly lean forward and trust to the right shoulder, while drawing your left hand back (Fig. 27).

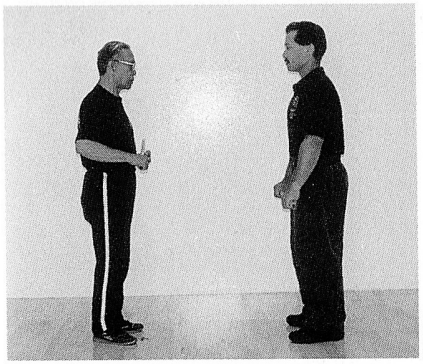


Fig 28

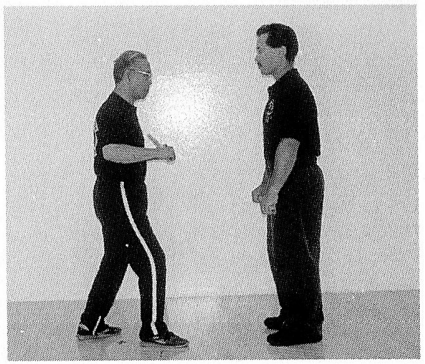
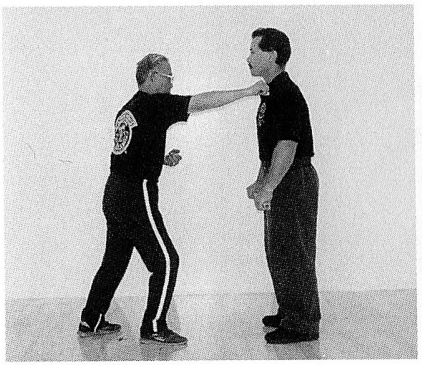


Fig 29



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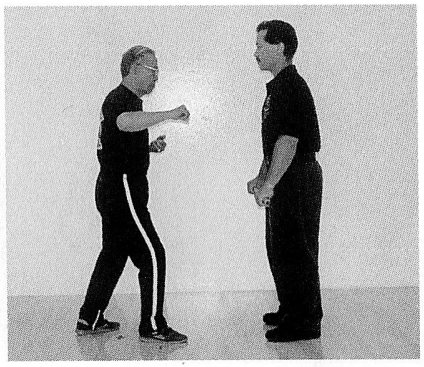


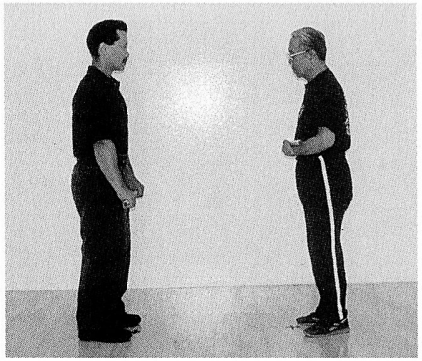
Fig 31

Strike Number Eight (light)

Command: "Prepare for strike number eight, light." Stand in a ready position with the stick resting on the left arm, your left palm rests against the middle of your chest (Fig. 28).

Command: "Ready." Step forward with the right foot to 12:00, adjust the left foot to 6:00, and grab the weapon with the right hand (Fig. 29).

Command: "Strike." Snap hit to the throat with the middle of the stick (Fig. 30). Snap the weapon hand back to the chest, and draw your left hand back to the left side (Fig. 31).



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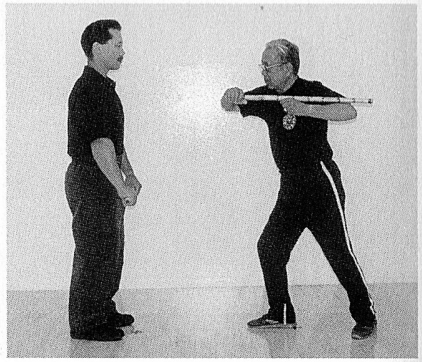


Fig 33

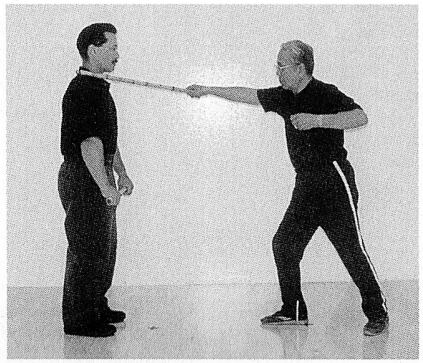


Fig 34

Strike Number Eight (heavy)

Command: "Prepare for strike number eight, heavy." Stand in a ready position with the stick resting on the left arm, your left palm rests against the middle of your chest (Fig. 32).

Command: "Ready." Step forward with the right foot to 12:00, adjust the left foot to 6:00. Cross the weapon over to the left side and elevate the right elbow and rest the weapon on the left arm and elbow (Fig. 33).

Command: "Strike." Strike to the base of the right side of the opponent's neck (Fig. 34).

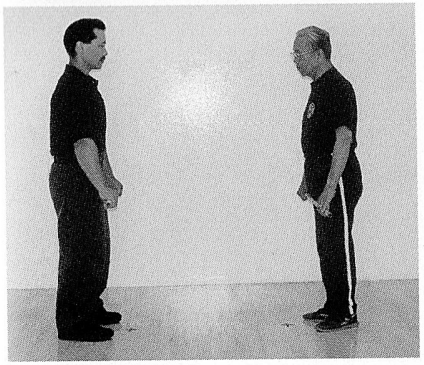
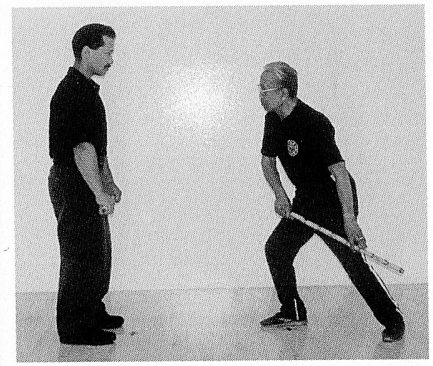


Fig 35



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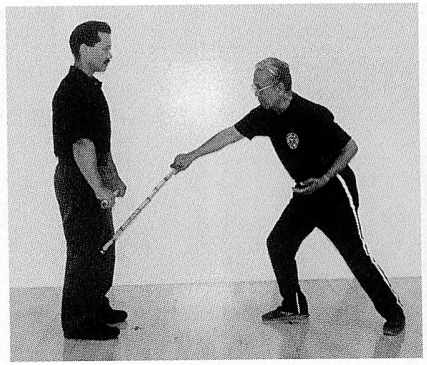


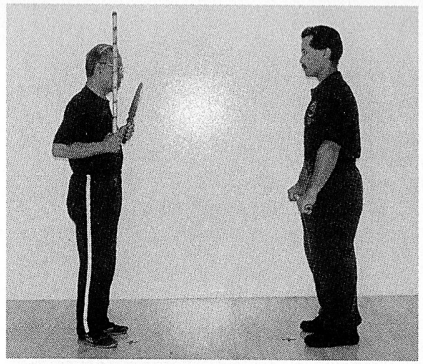
Fig 37

Strike Number Nine

Command: "Prepare for strike number nine." Stand in a ready position with the stick held across your thighs and the dagger resting on its tip (Fig. 35).

Command: "Ready." Step forward with the right foot to 12:00, chamber the weapon down and along side of your left leg, and adjust the left foot to 6:00 (Fig. 36).

Command: "Strike." Strike to the right ankle, follow-upward using the bladed edge and top six inches of the weapon (Fig. 37).



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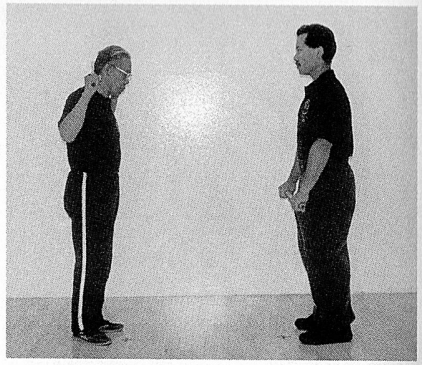


Fig 39

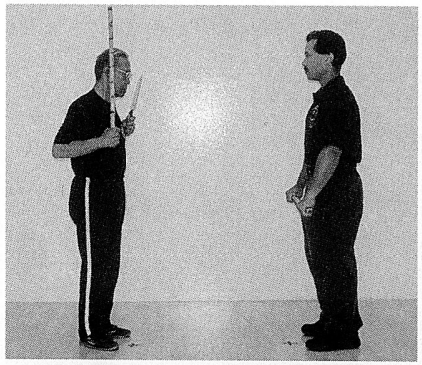


Fig 40

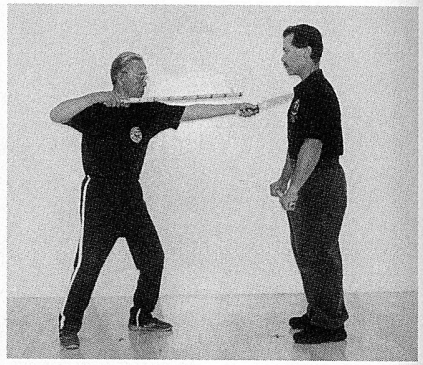


Fig 41

Strike Number Ten

Command: "Prepare for strike number ten." Stand in a ready position with both stick and dagger held vertically parallel (Fig. 38).

Command: "Ready." Cross both weapons behind your neck (Fig. 39).

Command: "Draw." Pull both weapons from behind the neck and place them directly in front of your chest, with elbows tucked in and tips pointing upward (Fig. 40).

Command: "Aim." Step forward with the left foot to 11:00, adjust the right foot to 6:00, thrust the dagger to the opponent's throat (Fig. 41).

Command: "Strike." retract the dagger to the left side and thrust the stick to the opponent's throat, while keeping your body square to the target.

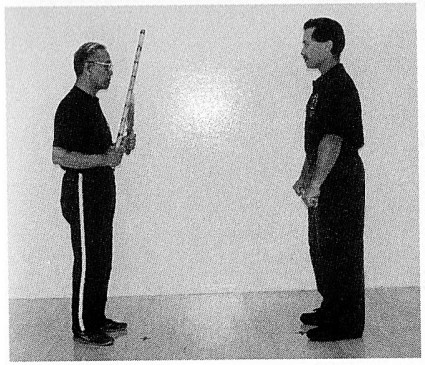


Fig 42

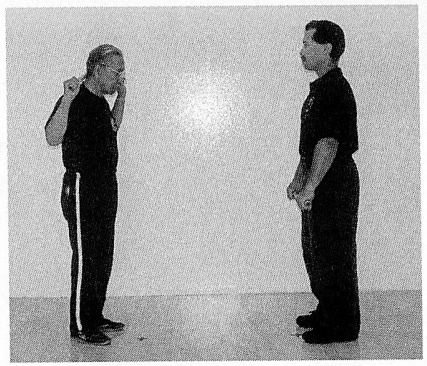
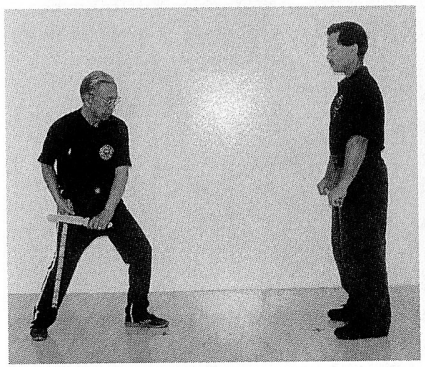


Fig 43



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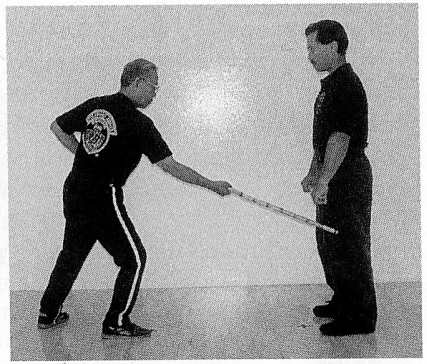


Fig 45

Strike Number Eleven

Command: "Prepare for strike number eleven." Stand in a ready position with both stick and dagger held vertically parallel (Fig. 42).

Command: "Ready." Cross both weapons behind your neck (Fig. 43).

Command: "Draw." Step forward with the left foot to 12:00, adjust the right foot to 6:00, pull both weapons from behind your neck and place them along side the right leg, with the dagger held over the stick (Fig. 44).

Command: "Strike." Step forward with the right foot to 12:00, adjust the left foot to 6:00, and strike to the opponent's left ankle while pulling your dagger back to your left side (Fig. 45).

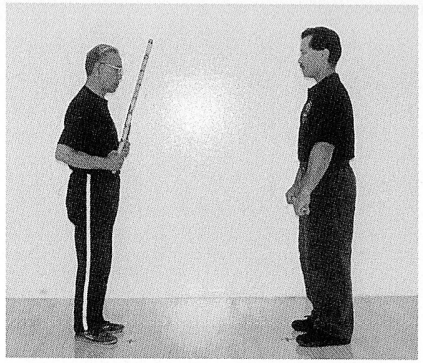


Fig 46

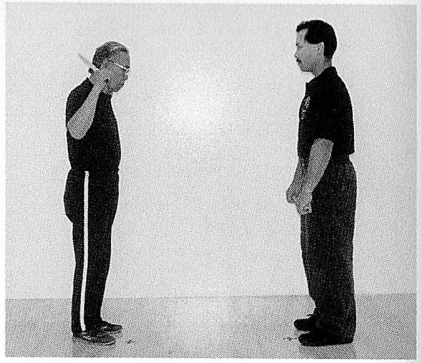


Fig 47

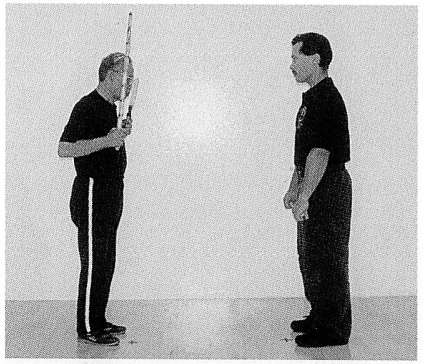


Fig 48

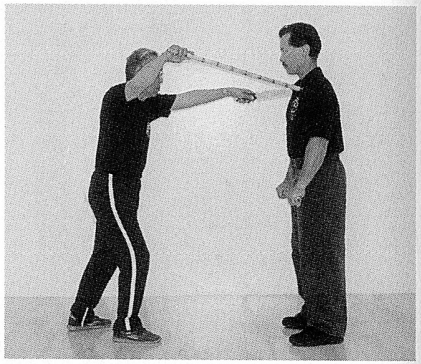


Fig 49

Strike Number Twelve

Command: "Prepare for strike number twelve." Stand in a ready position with both stick and dagger held vertical and parallel (Fig. 46).

Command: "Ready." Cross both weapons behind your neck (Fig. 47).

Command: "Draw." Pull both weapons from behind your neck and place them directly in front of your chest with elbows tucked in (Fig. 48).

Command: "Strike." Step forward with the right foot to 12:00, adjust the left foot to 6:00, and simultaneously thrust the dagger to the opponent's right shoulder and the stick to the opponent's left shoulder (Fig. 49).

7

Basic Single Stick Defenses

Introduction

This chapter describes and illustrates one basic defensive counter against each of the twelve attacks found in the de fondo style.

The de fondo style is most suited to close-quarter combat. Like a closed door, one must either use force to break in or look for another opening. Although it is not absolutely necessary, the de fondo style generally requires the use of a shorter weapon of about twenty-four inches in length. However, it is a simple fact that in times of emergency one cannot be certain as to what type and length of weapon will be readily available. Since we live in times of peace, it is no longer common for a sword or bolo to be held in a sheath around the waist of its bearer. The student must always remember that the baston or stick is a simulation of a bolo and he must, therefore, always strike with the top six-inches of the weapon. There may be a few instances where the flat side of the bolo is used, like when deflecting an oncoming sword or bolo strike. This actually has more to do with the preservation of one's own blade, than in proper fighting technique.

The Defensive System

The techniques of estilo de fondo represent the foundation of the Giron arnis escrima system. There are a total of 144 movements spread out over the twelve angles of attack. Mastery of this fundamental style takes over 200 hours (or two years) of intensive training, or what the Grandmaster calls "playing." Following is a description and depiction of fourteen basic stick defenses with counter attacks found in the de fondo style.

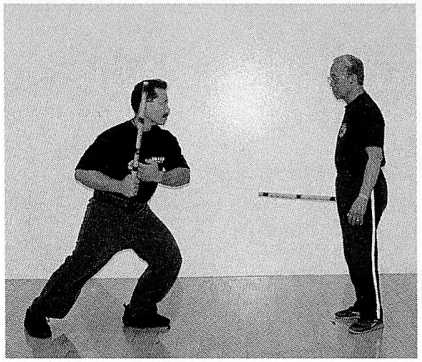
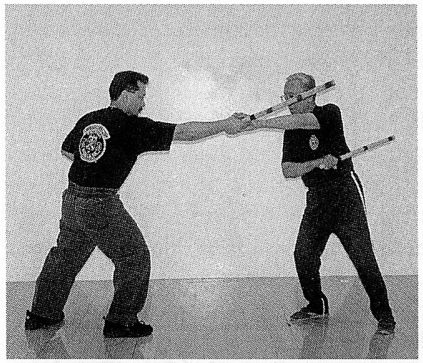


Fig 1

Fig 2



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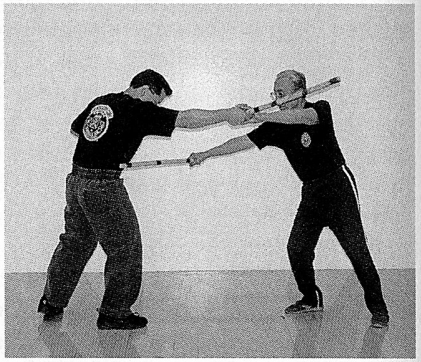


Fig 4

Defense Against Angle One

Face your opponent in a ready position (Fig. 1). As your opponent attacks, step forward with your right foot to 12:00 to engage your opponent's stick, while dragging your left foot back to 6:00. As you deflect your opponent's stick, your left hand will come to the inside of the body and move upward to check your opponent's weapon arm (Fig. 2). Your stick will clear back and be chambered into the number four (heavy) position for a counter blow (Fig. 3). Your left-hand check will remain on your opponent's wrist as you deliver a number four strike to his rib cage (Fig. 4). As you continue the counter attack, your stick will move upward with a number eleven strike to your opponent's throat (Figs. 5, 6).

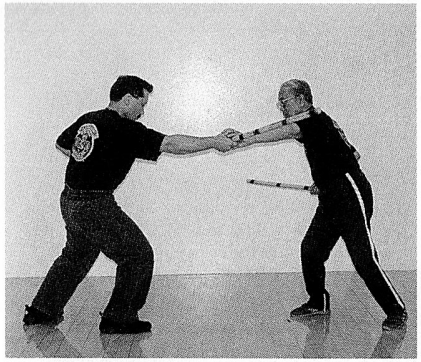


Fig 5

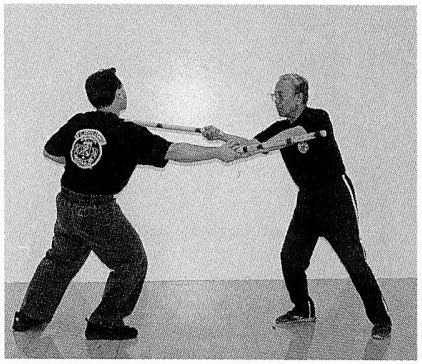
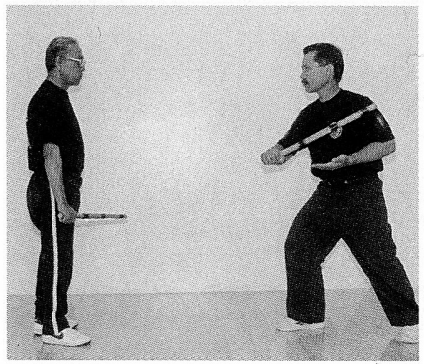


Fig 6

Defense Against Angle Two

Face your opponent in a ready position (Fig. 7). As your opponent attacks, step forward with your right foot to 12:00. Deflect your opponent's stick with your stick as if there was an explosion within you, while at the same time employing a hard check with your left hand to the wrist of your opponent's attacking arm (Fig. 8). Next, drag your left foot to 6:00, placing it out of the path of your opponent's weapon, while retracting your stick to the right side of your body, and keeping a grip on your opponent's wrist (Fig. 9). Very quickly (and on the off beat), snap hit your opponent's face with a number one strike (Fig. 10), retract your stick (Fig. 11), execute a number eleven strike (Fig. 12), chamber your stick to your left side (Fig. 13), and finish with a number two strike (Fig. 14).



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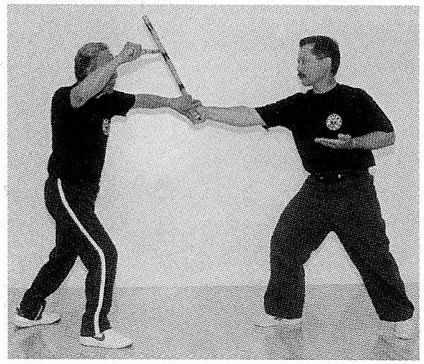

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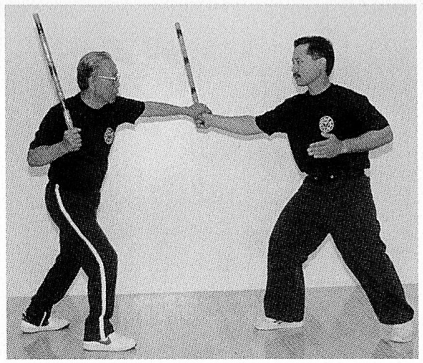


Fig 9

Fig 10

Fig 11

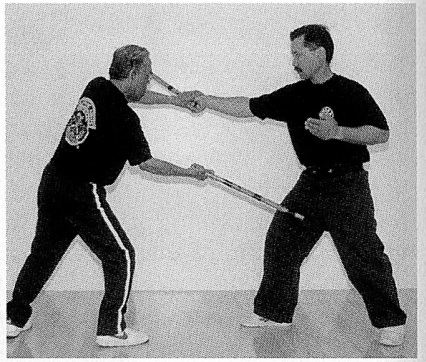


Fig 12

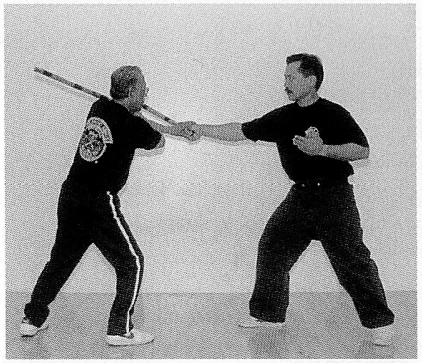
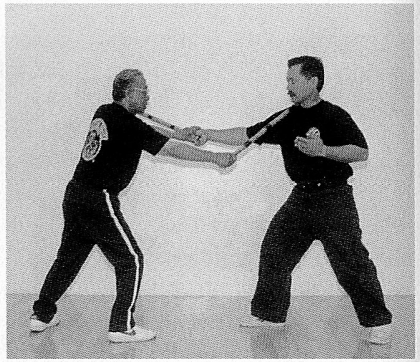


Fig 13



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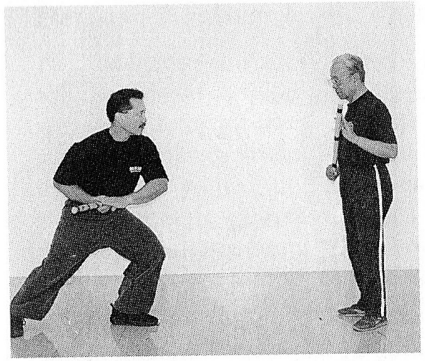

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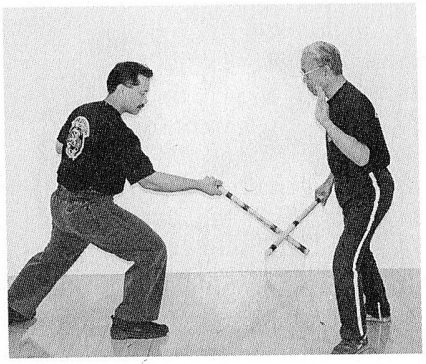

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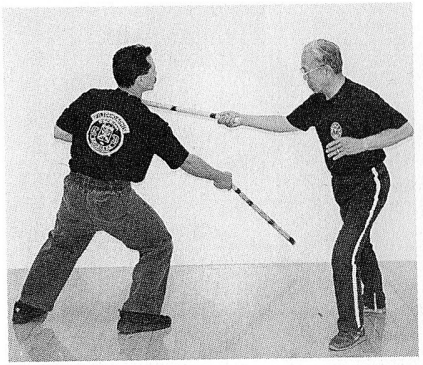


Fig 17

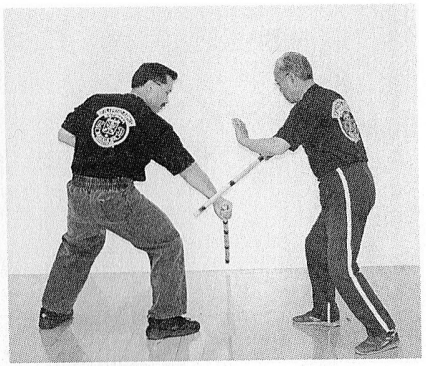
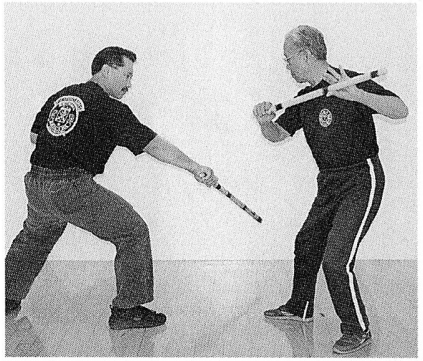


Fig 18

Defense Against Angle Three

Face your opponent in a ready position (Fig. 15). As your opponent attacks, bring your stick directly down diagonally, while at the same time assuming a left foot lead facing 9:00 (Fig. 16). Circle your stick around until it is on top of your opponents stick, following along the path of his arm to his throat (Fig. 17). Strike all the way through your target. As your opponent initiates a second strike (in this case a number four heavy), assume a right foot lead facing 1:00 and strike his wrist with a fanning strike (Fig. 18). Shift your weight by slightly leaning back and chamber your stick in a number two position to prepare for another strike (Fig. 19).



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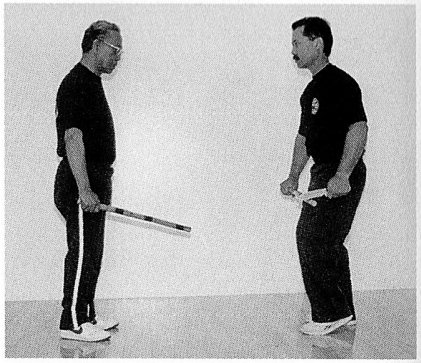

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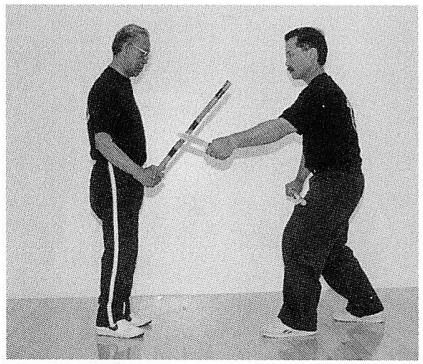

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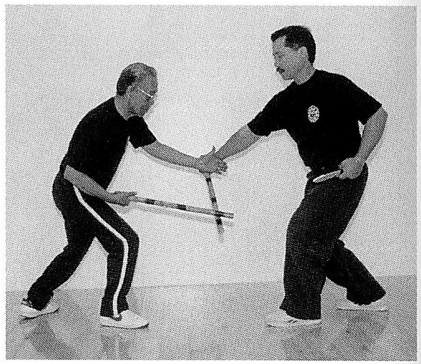

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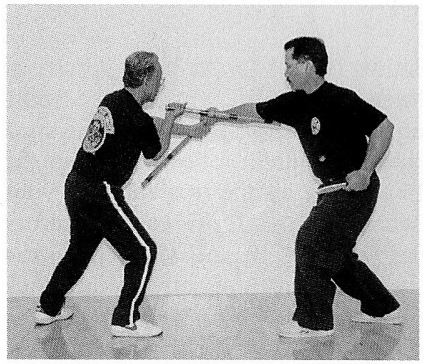

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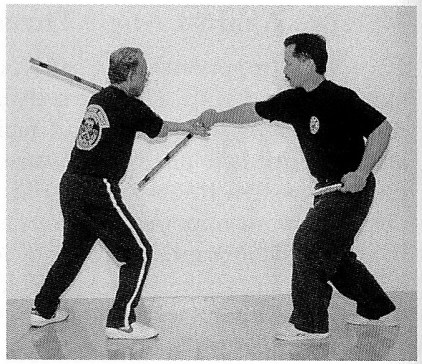


Fig 24

Defense Against Angle Four (light)

Face your opponent in a ready position (Fig. 20). As your opponent attacks, inside deflect his dagger with your stick (Fig. 21). Step back with your left foot to 6:00, while at the same time do a down block on your opponent's stick. With the back of your left hand, reverse check the wrist of your opponent's weapon hand (Fig. 22). Follow-up with a number eleven strike to the inside of your opponent's biceps, keeping your left hand on the wrist of your opponent's weapon hand (Fig. 23). Chamber your stick to the left side (Fig. 24), and finish with a number two strike to your opponent's arm (Fig. 25).

Defense Against Angle Four (heavy)

Face your opponent in a ready position (Fig. 26). As your opponent attacks, take a left foot lead to 10:00. Execute an cross block by raising

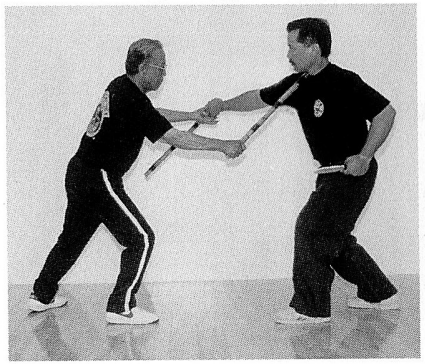


Fig 25

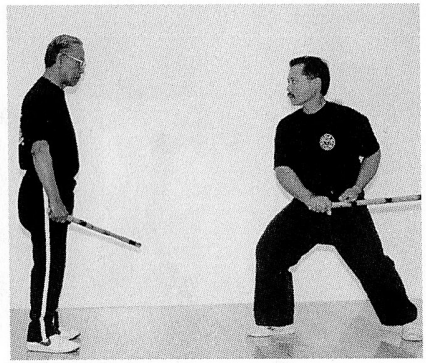


Fig 26

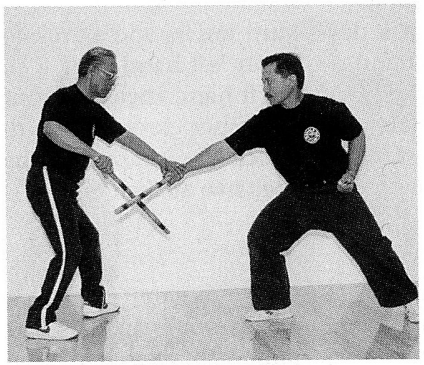
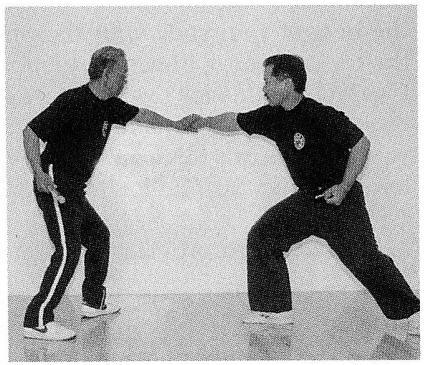


Fig 27



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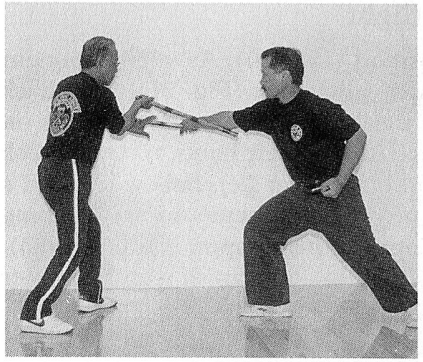

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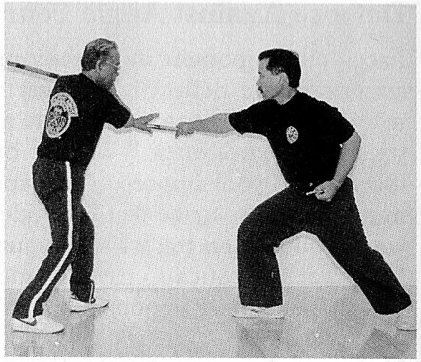

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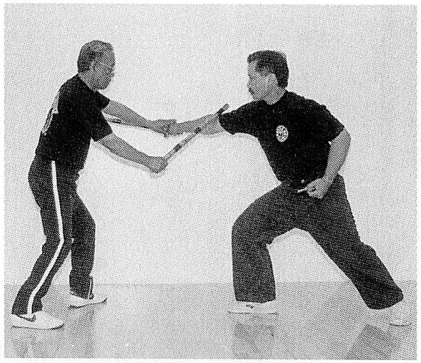


Fig 31

the butt of your stick with the tip at a downward angle, and check to the top of your opponent's weapon hand with your left hand (Fig. 27). Chamber your stick to your right side, keep the left hand check on your opponent's weapon hand (Fig. 28). Execute a number eleven strike to your opponent's forearm (Fig. 29). Chamber back the weapon to the left side (Fig. 30). Follow through with a number two strike (Fig. 31).

Defense Against Angle Five

Face your opponent in a ready position (Fig. 32). As your opponent attacks, retreat with your right foot to 6:00, with your stick gliding along the outside of your opponent's stick, and with your left hand checking your opponent's weapon hand (Fig. 33). (Be sure not to go

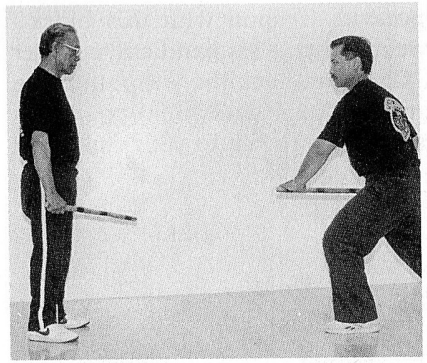


Fig 32

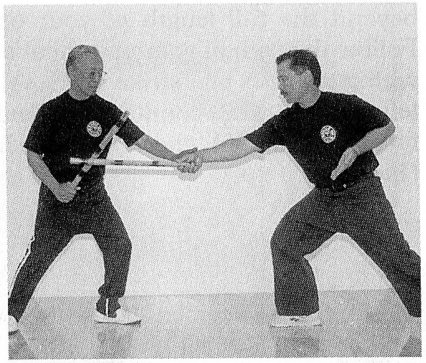
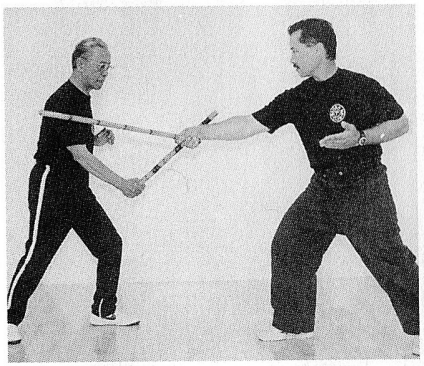


Fig 33



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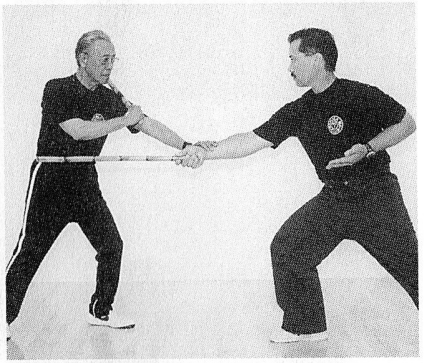
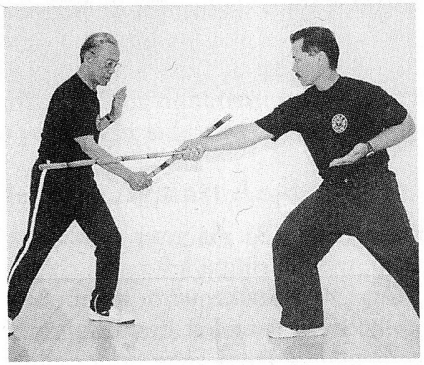


Fig 35



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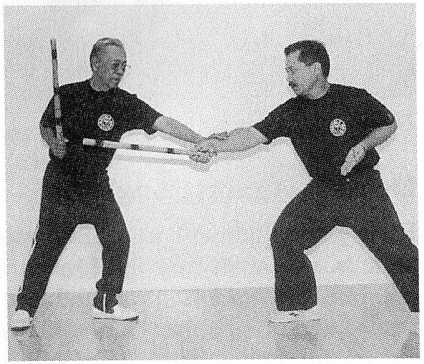


Fig 37

beyond the full length of your opponents weapon with this block.) Follow the path of your opponent's weapon up to his hand and counter with a number one strike (Fig. 34). Chamber back the weapon to the left side (Fig. 35), counter with a number two strike to your opponent's forearm (Fig. 36), check it, then chamber your stick to your right side (Fig. 37).

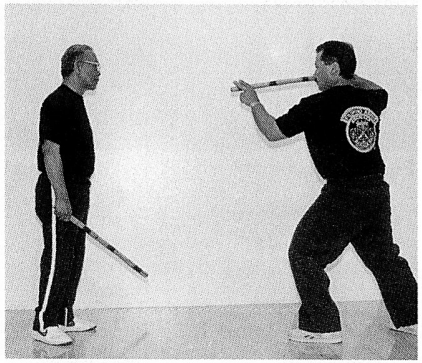


Fig 38

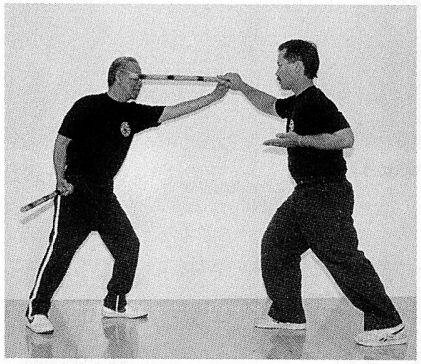


Fig 39

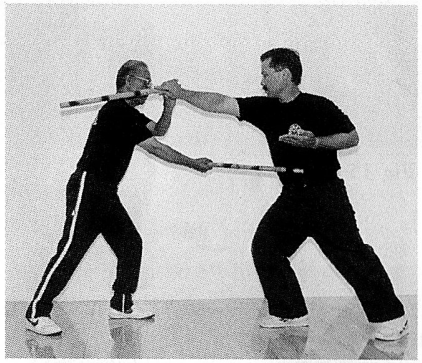


Fig 40

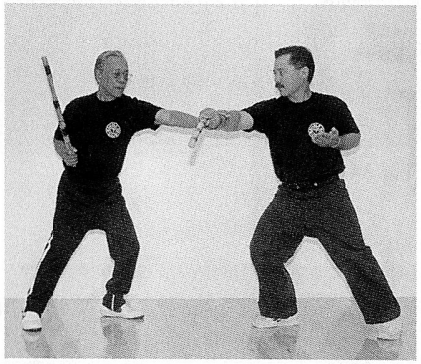


Fig 41

Defense Against Angle Six

Face your opponent in a ready position (Fig. 38). As your opponent attacks, step with your left foot to 11:00, while using a left hand check to your opponent's weapon hand (Fig. 39). Strike with a number three to your opponent's mid-section, keeping your left hand on your opponent's hand (Fig. 40). Pull your stick out from your opponent's mid-section and chamber it to your right side, dragging your right foot

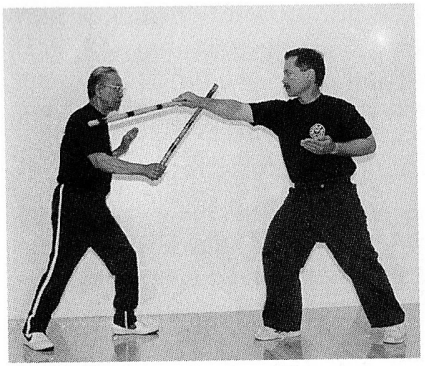


Fig 42

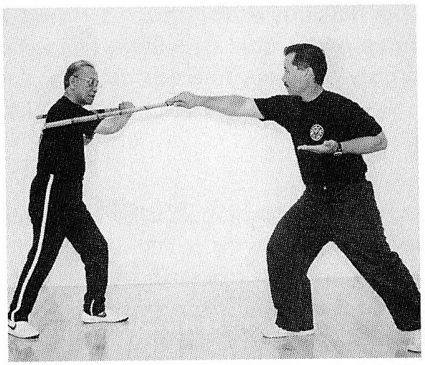


Fig 43

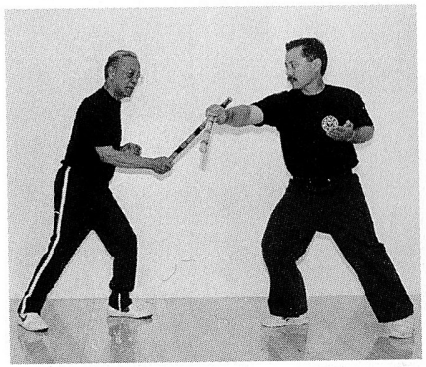


Fig 44

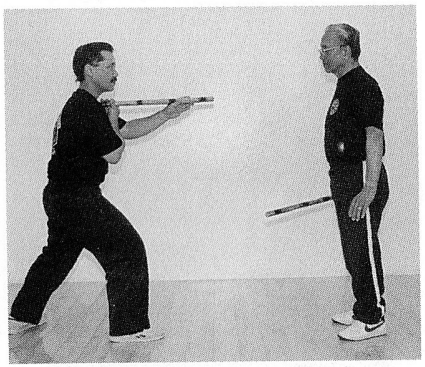


Fig 45

back to 6:00 (Fig. 41). Twirl your stick to execute a number one strike, while pulling your left hand back to your left side (Fig. 42). Chamber your stick back to the left (Fig. 43), and follow-up with a number two strike to your opponent's forearm (Fig. 44). Chamber your stick back to your right side and check the opponent's arm (Fig. 45).

Defense Against Angle Seven

Face your opponent in a ready position (Fig. 46). As your opponent attacks, step to 11:00 with your left foot, with your stick gliding along the outside of your opponent's stick, and with your left hand checking your opponent's weapon hand (Fig. 47) (Be sure not to go beyond the full length of your opponents weapon with this block.) Using the path of your opponent's weapon follow it up with a number one strike to

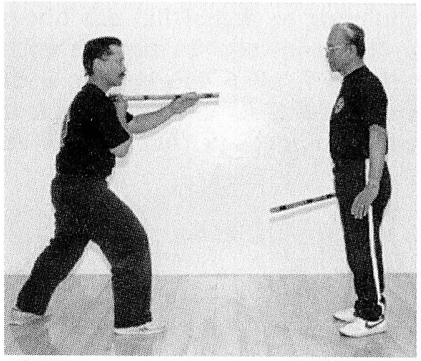


Fig 46

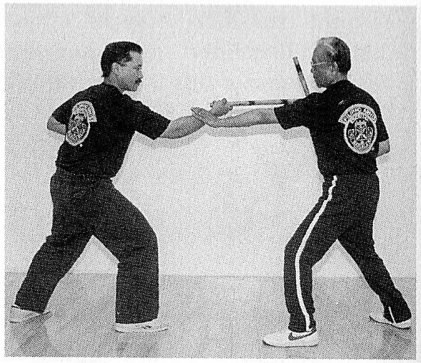


Fig 47

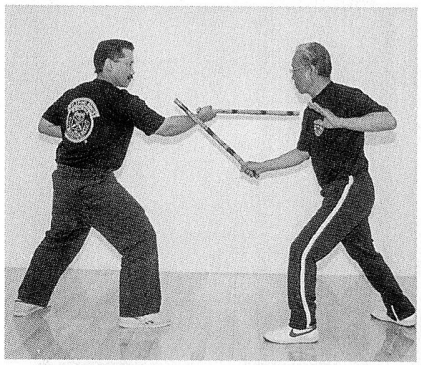


Fig 48

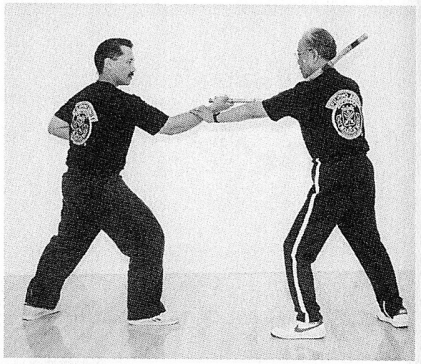


Fig 49

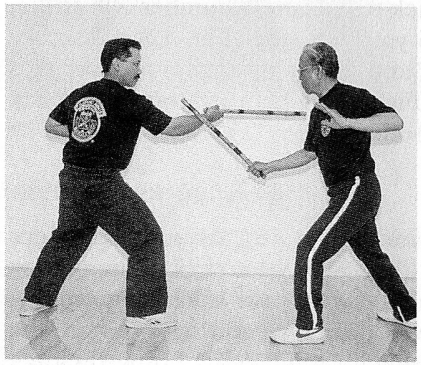


Fig 50

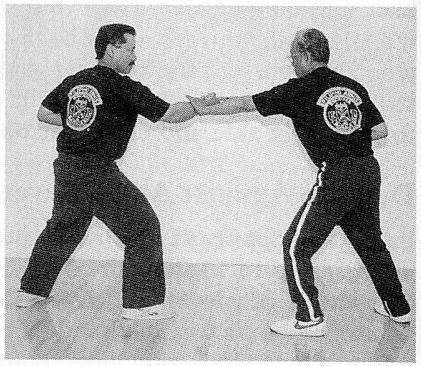


Fig 51

your opponent's forearm (Fig. 48). Chamber your stick to your left side (Fig. 49) and follow-up with a number two strike to your opponent's forearm (Fig. 50). Do a left-hand check to the forearm of your opponent's weapon hand, and chamber your stick to the right (Fig. 51).

Defense Against Angle Eight (light)

Face your opponent in a ready position (Fig. 52). As your opponent attacks, step back with your left foot to 6:00, strike upward with your stick using a snap hit to the underside of your opponent's weapon (Fig. 53). Do a left-hand check to the wrist of your opponent's weapon hand, lean forward, and thrust the right side of your opponent's shoulder with a number seven (Fig. 54). Pull your stick out, chambering it to the right side of your body (Fig. 55), and follow-up with a number eleven strike to your opponent's body (Fig. 56). Chamber your stick to your left side (Fig. 57), and finish with a number two strike to the right side of your opponent's neck (Fig. 58).

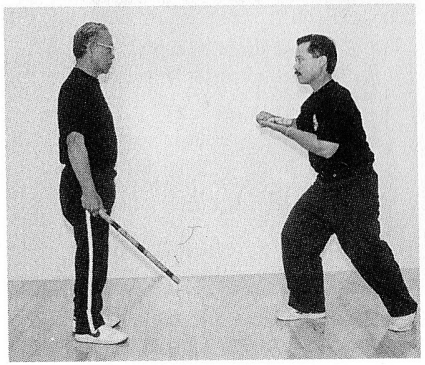


Fig 52

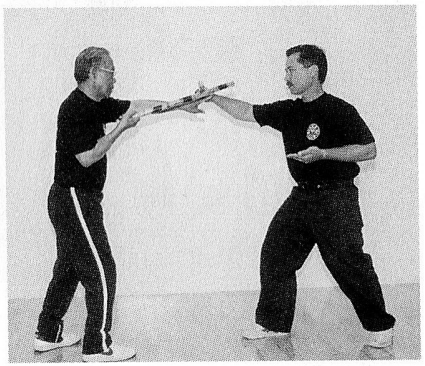


Fig 53

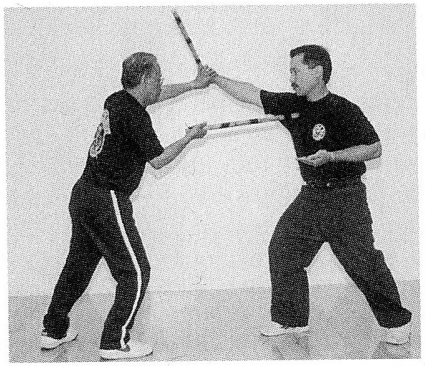


Fig 54

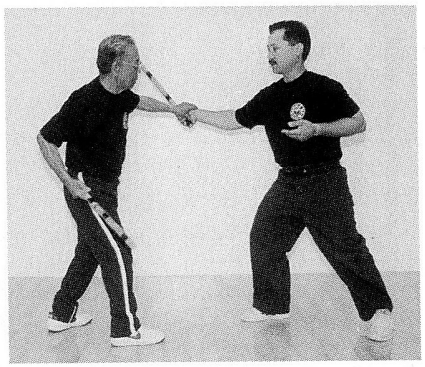


Fig 55

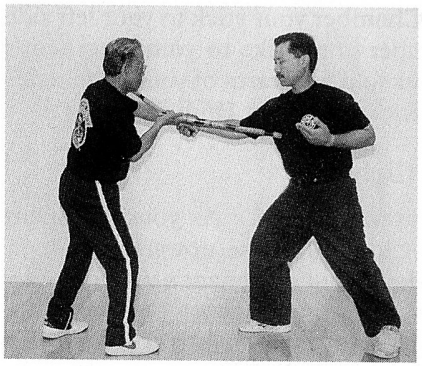


Fig 56

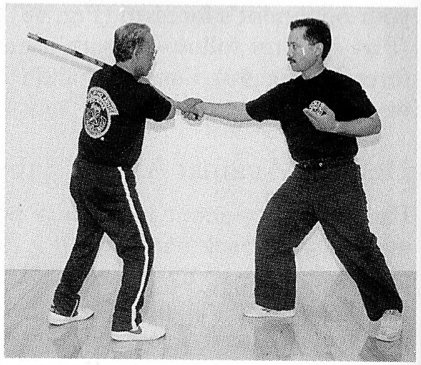
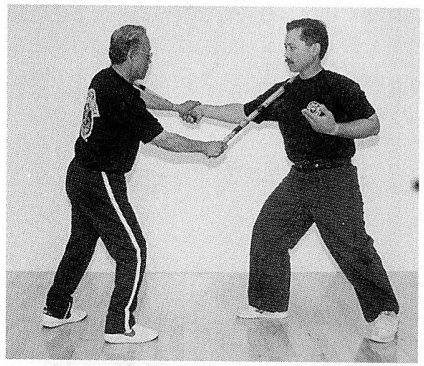


Fig 57



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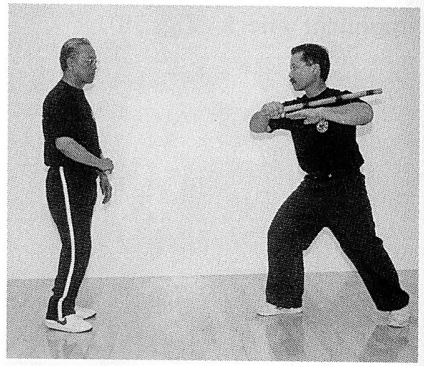


Fig 59

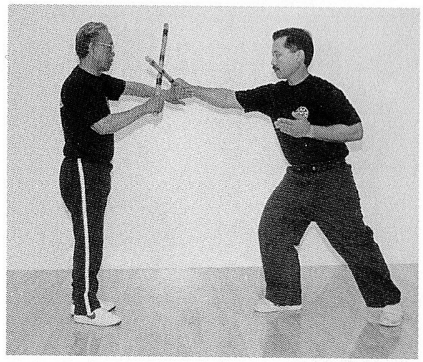


Fig 60

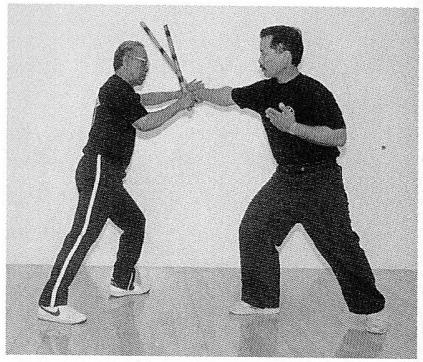


Fig 61

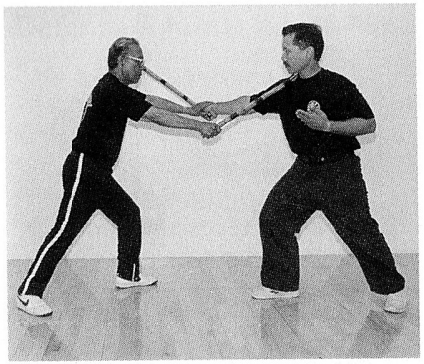


Fig 62

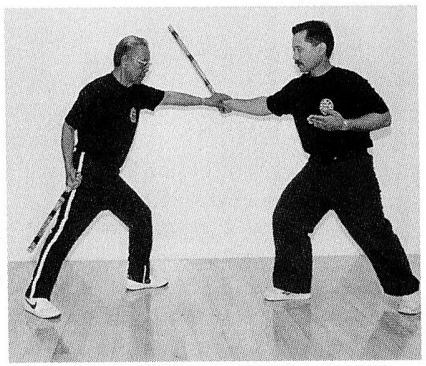


Fig 63

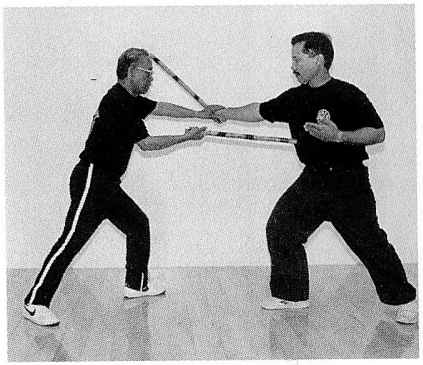


Fig 64

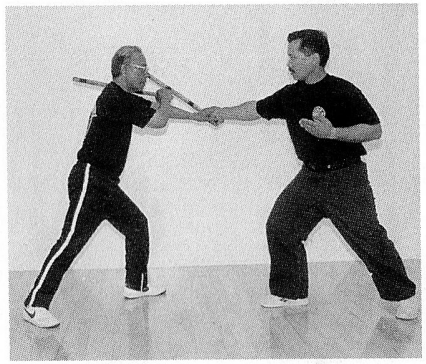


Fig 65

Defense Against Angle Eight (heavy)

Face your opponent in a ready position (Fig. 59). As your opponent attacks, intercept his stick with your stick held vertically, and with your left hand do an inside parry to your opponent's weapon hand (Fig. 60). Step forward with your left foot to 10:00, parrying your opponent's stick over to the left (Fig. 61). Counter with a number two strike to the base of the right side of your opponent's neck, keeping your left hand check on your opponent's weapon hand (Fig. 62). Follow through to the right side (Fig. 63), and finish with a number eleven strike to his body (Fig. 64). Chamber your stick to the left (Fig. 65).

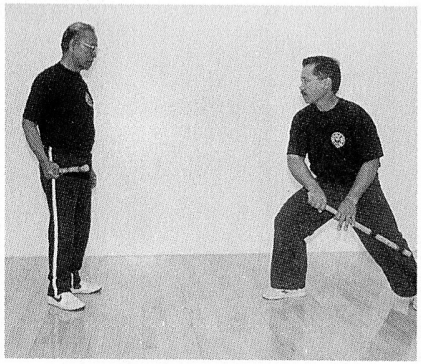


Fig 66

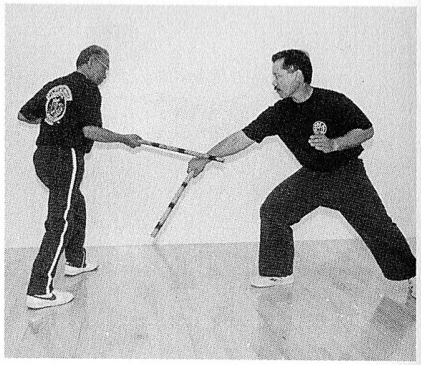


Fig 67

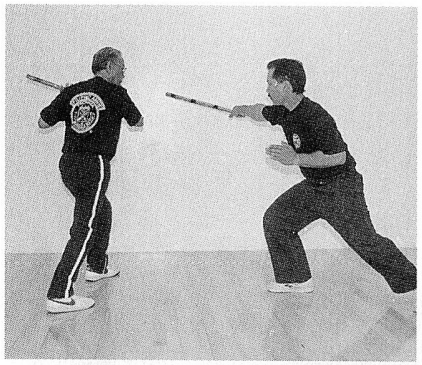


Fig 68

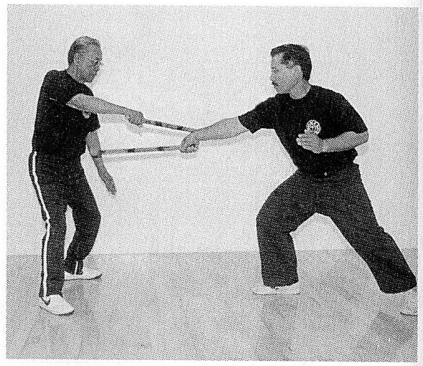


Fig 69

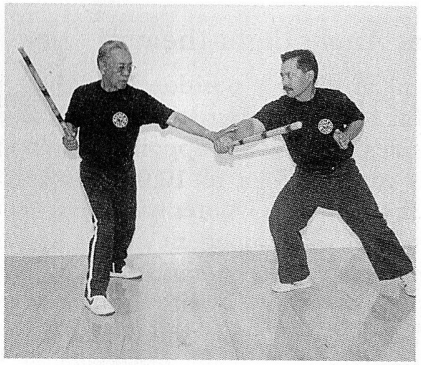


Fig 70

Defense Against Angle Nine

Face your opponent in a ready position (Fig. 66). As your opponent attacks, take a wide step to 9:00 with your left foot, hitting your opponent's forearm with a number three strike (Fig. 67). Follow through and chamber your stick to your left side (Fig. 68). As your opponent returns with a number three strike, counter with a number four (heavy) strike his forearm (Fig. 69). Shifting your body weight to the right, do a left hand check while chambering your stick to the right (Fig. 70).

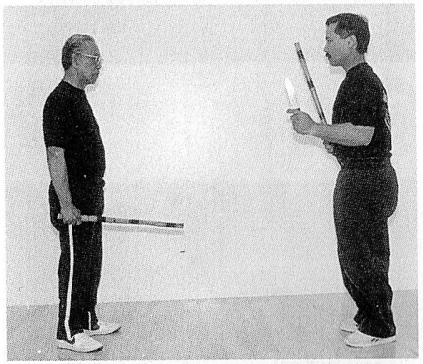


Fig 71

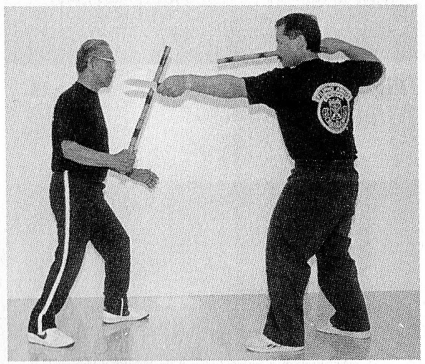


Fig 72

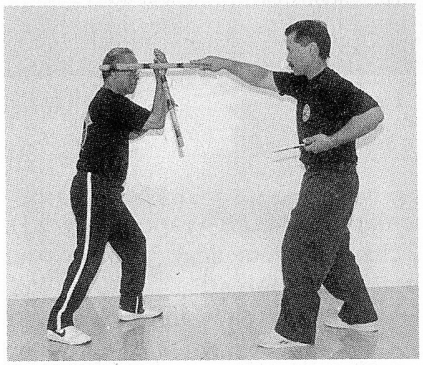


Fig 73

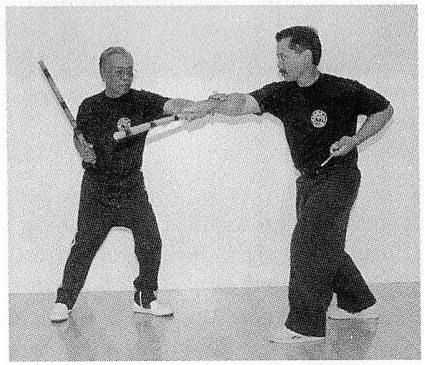


Fig 74

Defense Against Angle Ten

Face your opponent in a ready position (Fig. 71). As your opponent attacks, inside tap your opponent's dagger and take a left foot lead to 11:00 (Fig. 72). Along a clockwise motion with the butt of your stick

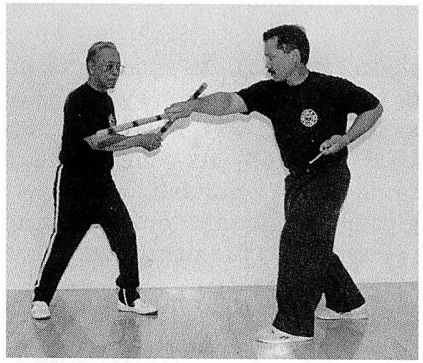


Fig 75

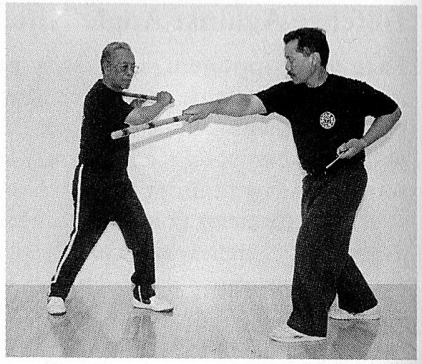


Fig 76

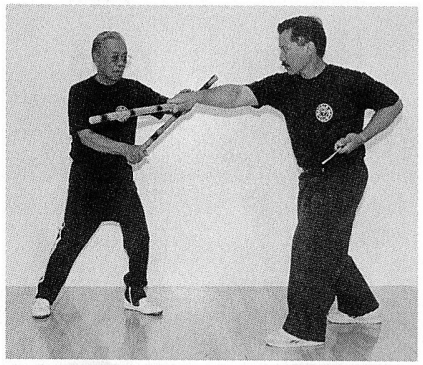


Fig 77

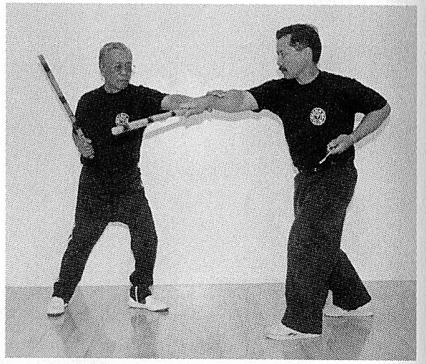


Fig 78

raised, do an outside parry using the flat side of the weapon (Fig. 73). Drag your right foot back to 6:00, chamber your stick back to your right side and check hard to your opponent's forearm (Fig. 74). Pull your left hand back to the left and follow-up with a number one strike (Fig. 75). Chamber your stick back to the left (Fig. 76), and follow-up with a number two strike to your opponent's forearm (Fig. 77). Check hard to the forearm and chamber your stick to the right side (Fig. 78).

Defense Against Angle Eleven

Face your opponent in a ready position (Fig. 79). As your opponent attacks, step to 10:00 with your left foot, deflect your stick down on your opponent's stick (Fig. 80). Using the path of your opponent's arm,

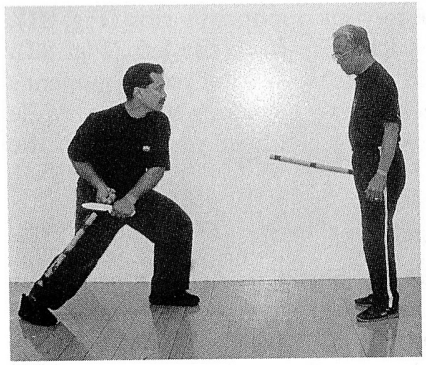


Fig 79

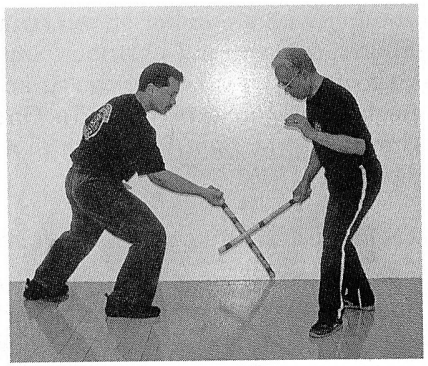


Fig 80

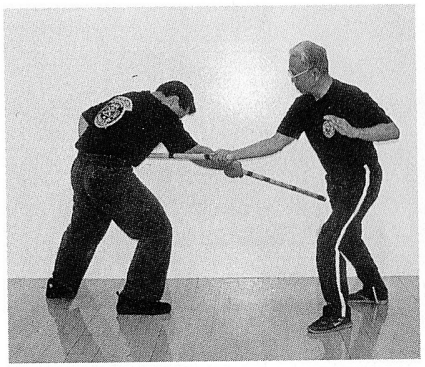


Fig 81

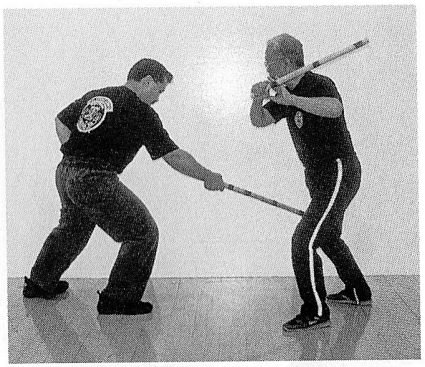


Fig 82

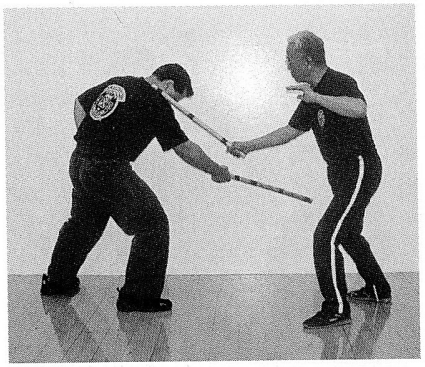


Fig 83

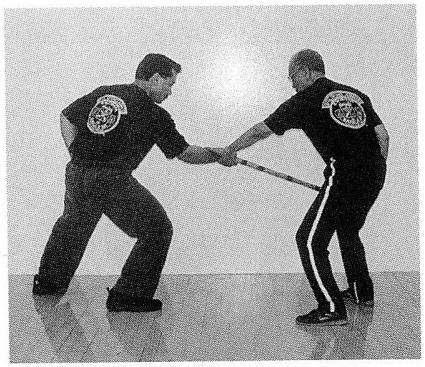


Fig 84

counter with a number eleven strike to your opponent's ribs (Fig. 81). Follow through and chamber your stick upward to the left (Fig. 82). Follow-up with a number two strike to either the back of your opponent's neck or his forearm (Fig. 83). Check your opponent's forearm, while dragging your right foot back to 6:00, and chamber your stick to the right (Fig. 84).

Defense Against Angle Twelve

Face your opponent in a ready position (Fig. 85). As your opponent attacks, step forward with your left foot to 11:00, left-hand parry your opponent's right hand, and do a number three strike to your opponent's mid-section (Fig. 86). Pull your stick out and chamber it to your right side, drag your right foot to 6:00 while keeping the left-hand check on your opponent's stick arm (Fig. 87). Counter with a number one strike

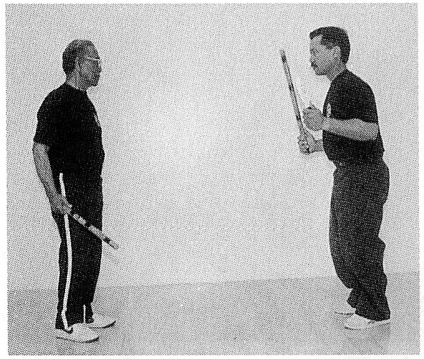


Fig 85

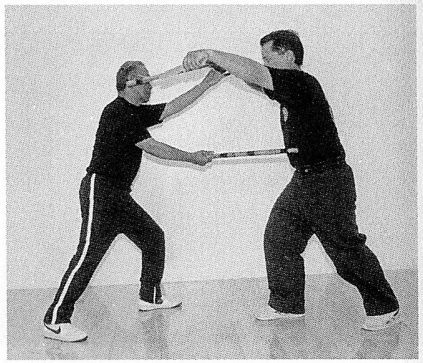


Fig 86

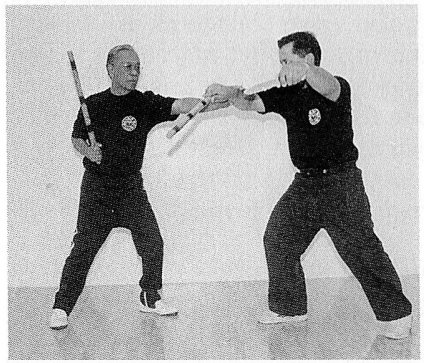


Fig 87

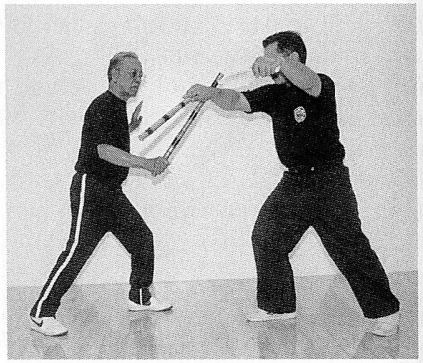


Fig 88

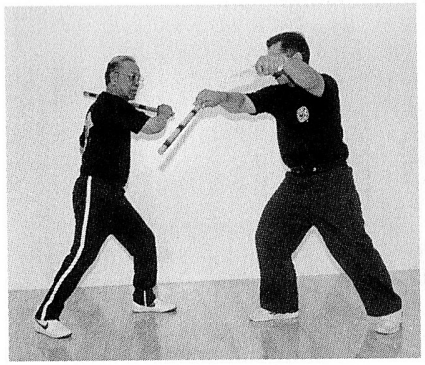


Fig 89

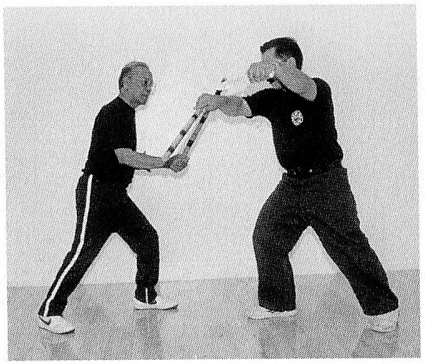


Fig 90

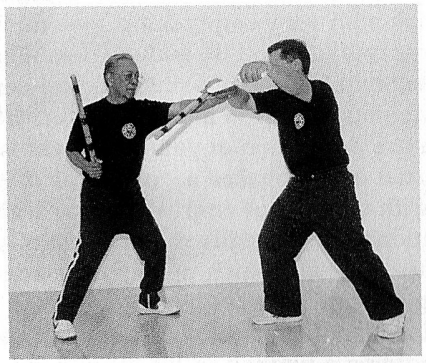


Fig 91

to his wrist (Fig. 88). Chamber your stick to the left (Fig. 89), follow-up with a number two strike (Fig. 90), and check to your opponent's forearm (Fig. 91).

8

Stick to Stick Disarming

Introduction

It is important to keep in mind that the stick is but an extension of the hand. As you block with your empty-hand, you do with a stick; as you strike with the empty-hand, you do with a stick. What is not so similar is the skills and techniques needed to catch an on-coming arm or wrist, as opposed to catching a weapon in mid-motion. Catching a stick and removing it from the possession of your opponent is an art unto itself, a science of martial arts. It takes a good deal of training to disarm another person, with either your empty-hands or with a weapon of your own. The perfection of such skills requires many years of dedicated training and effort to perfect such potentially dangerous movements. When attempting a disarm, always be aware of your opponent's falling weapon so that it does not accidentally strike you, and of the possibility that he may be holding a weapon in his other hand. The following are examples of basic disarming techniques against the first five strikes.

Disarming Strike One

Face your opponent in a ready position (Fig. 1). As your opponent attacks, step to 12:00 with your right foot and to 6:00 with your left foot. While stepping, do an inside block with your stick (Fig. 2), then chamber the stick back to your left side and quickly check your opponent's weapon hand with your left hand (Fig. 3). Immediately follow this by striking your opponent's hand (behind his thumb), while at the same time pushing your opponent's stick back toward him with your left hand, disarming him (Figs. 4, 5). Next, check your opponent's forearm and chamber your stick back your right side (Fig. 6). Follow-up as necessary to disarm and/or subdue your opponent.

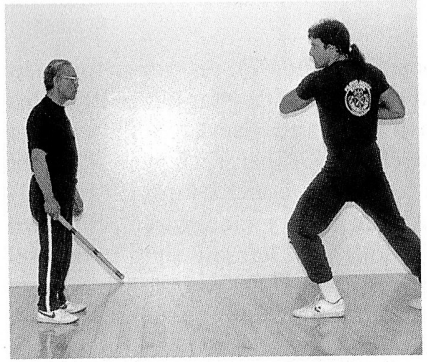
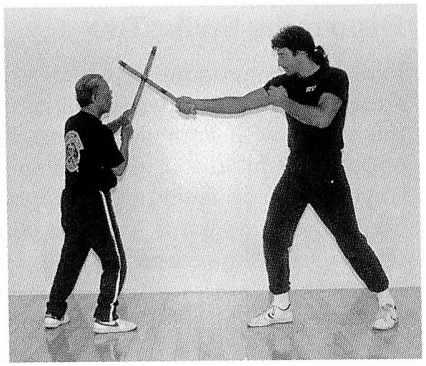


Fig 1



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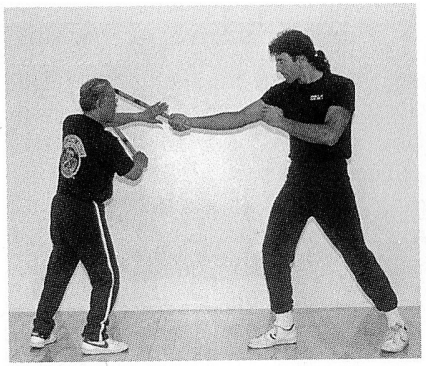


Fig 3

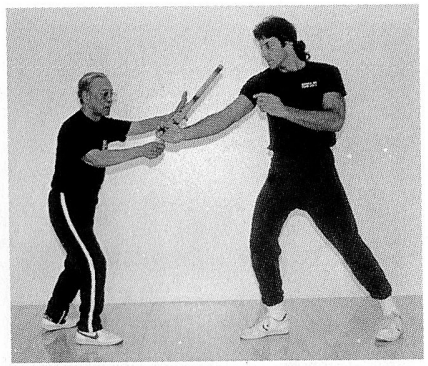
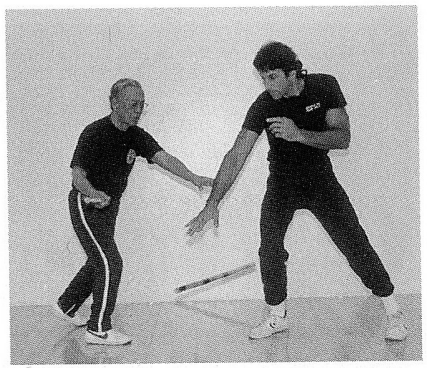


Fig 4



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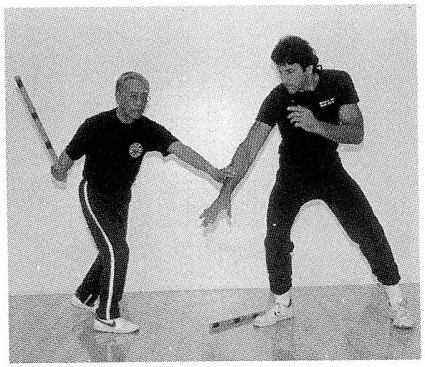


Fig 6

Disarming Strike Two

Face your opponent in a ready position (Fig. 7). As your opponent attacks, simultaneously step forward to 11:00 with your left foot, deflect the strike with your stick, and do a left-hand check on top of your opponent's hand to nullify his strike (Fig. 8). Next, turn your left hand so your palm is facing up and next to your opponent's thumb (Fig. 9). Twist the right hand and use your stick to pry clockwise, which will effect a hooking technique (Fig. 10). Both your left and right hands will finish the disarm with palms facing up (Fig. 11). Your left hand will receive your opponent's weapon at which time you will separate the two weapons by moving your left hand to the left and your right hand to right side (Fig. 12). Follow-up as necessary to disarm and/or subdue your opponent.

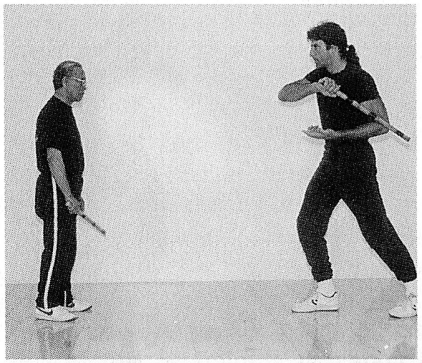


Fig 7

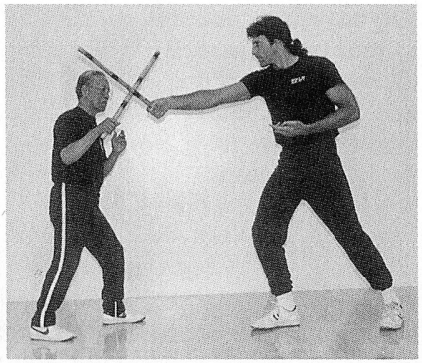


Fig 8

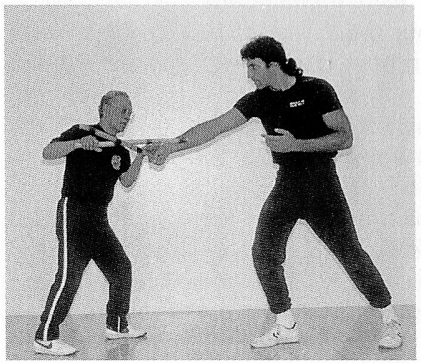


Fig 9

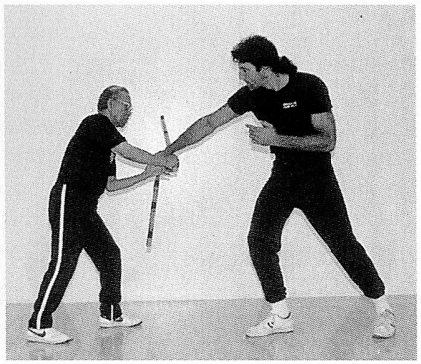


Fig 10

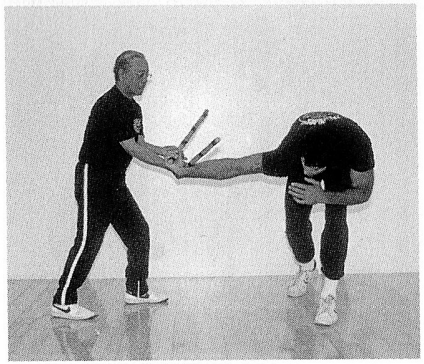


Fig 11

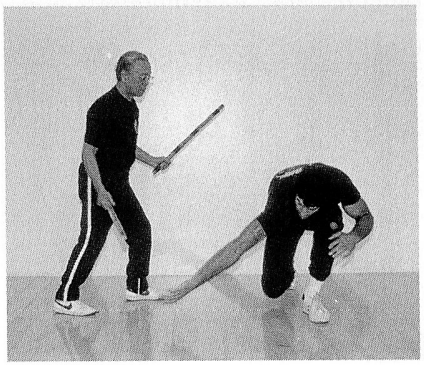
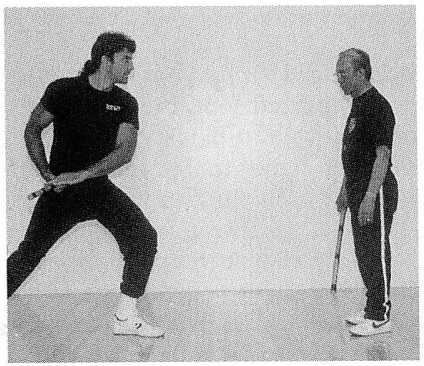


Fig 12

Disarming Strike Three

Face your opponent in a ready position (Fig. 13). As your opponent attacks with a horizontal blow, step with your left foot to 11:00. As you step, your stick will cross over and align vertically against your body (resting its end on your outer thigh), and will then encounter and block your opponent's stick (Fig. 14). Immediately insert your left hand from the outside, under and around your opponent's wrist (Fig. 15). Pry counterclockwise in an upward motion (Figs. 16, 17) while striking your opponent's ribs (Fig. 18). Follow-up as necessary to disarm and/or subdue your opponent.



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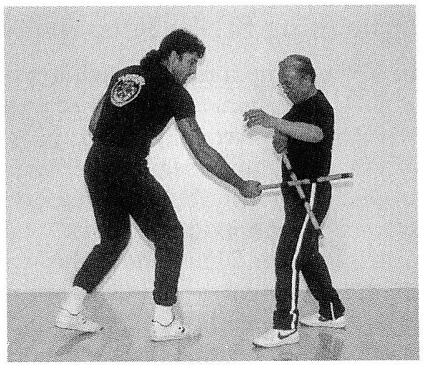

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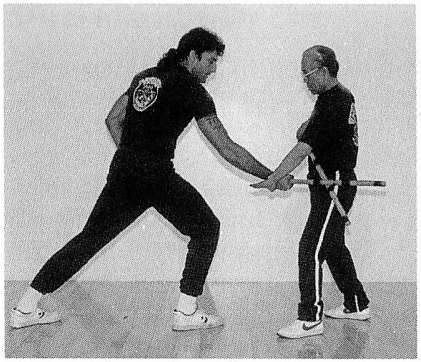

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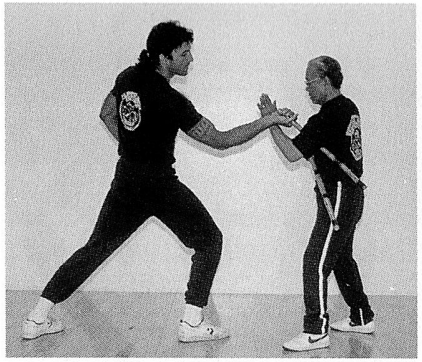

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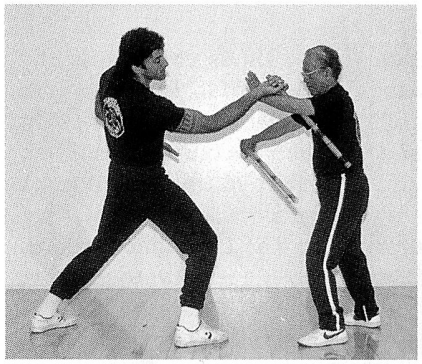

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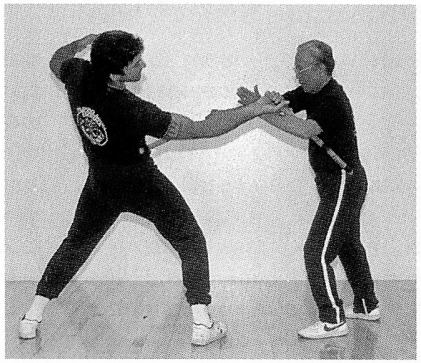


Fig 18

Disarming Strike Four (heavy)

Face your opponent in a ready position (Fig. 19). As your opponent attacks, simultaneously step to 9:00 with your left foot, raise the butt of your stick vertically (with tip pointing down) to block your opponent's stick, and begin inserting your left hand (palm facing up) around his wrist (Fig. 20). Continue wrapping your hand clockwise around your opponent's wrist while keeping your weapon in contact with his (Fig. 21). Follow through with a strike to the armpit and chamber your stick to your right side, while applying constant pressure to your opponent's forearm (Fig. 22). With downward pressure on your opponent's forearm, execute a number eleven strike to his neck (Fig. 23). Follow-up as necessary to disarm and/or subdue your opponent.

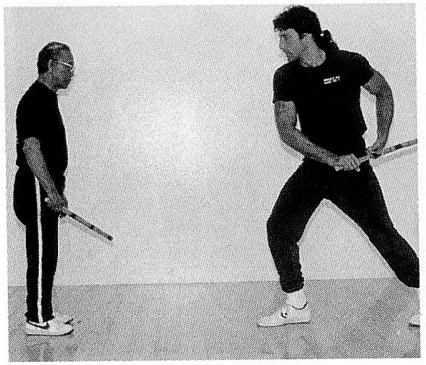
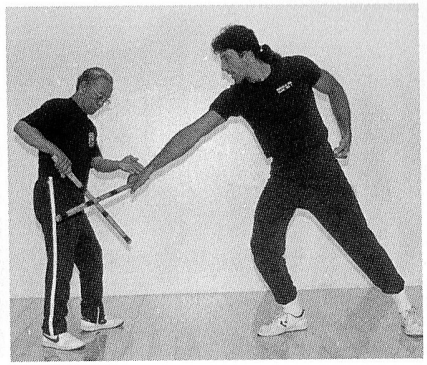


Fig 19



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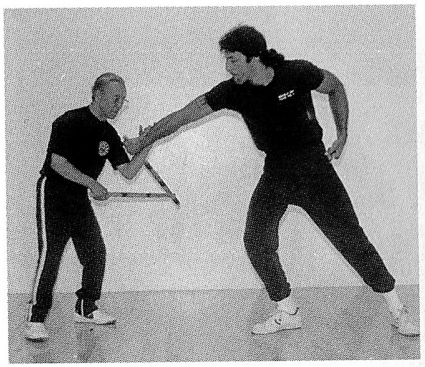

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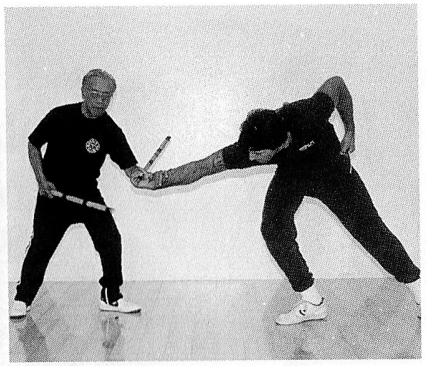

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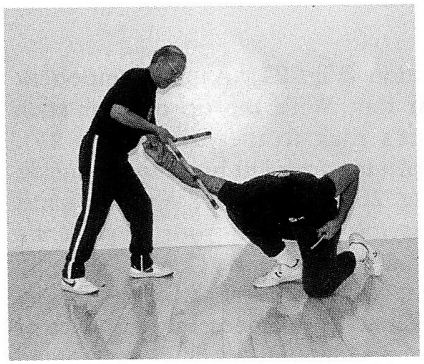

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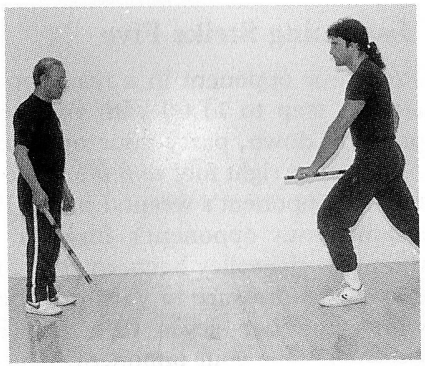
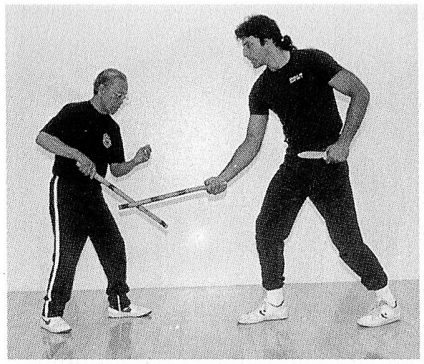


Fig 24



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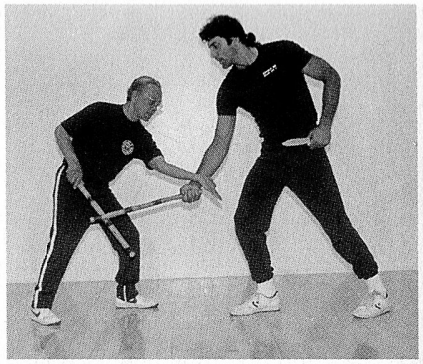


Fig 26

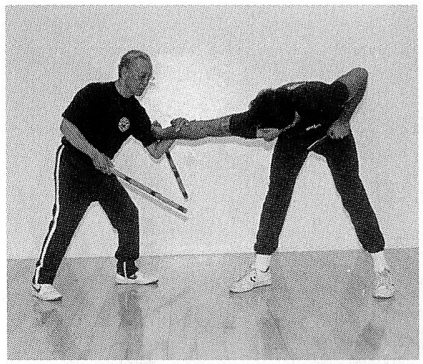


Fig 27

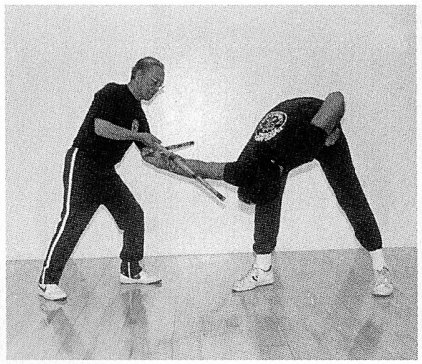


Fig 28

Disarming Strike Five

Face your opponent in a ready position (Fig. 24). As your opponent attacks, step to 11:00 with your left foot. With the tip of your stick pointing down, parry your opponent's stick to the inside (Fig. 25). Adjust your right foot to 6:00, while placing your left hand to the inside of your opponent's weapon hand (Fig. 26). Fully insert your left hand around your opponent's forearm, trying to pinch your opponent's thumb in the valley between your forearm and biceps (Fig. 27). Apply downward pressure to your opponent's forearm and strike his biceps with a number eleven (Fig. 28). Follow-up as necessary to disarm and/or subdue your opponent.

Part Four
Cadena de Mano

9

Empty-Hand to Knife Disarming

Introduction

Practitioner of the cadena de mano style need to have a working knowledge of the mechanics of arm and body. The cadena de mano stylist studies these movements and takes advantage of the knowledge of how to twist and torque an opponent's arm, to offset his balance and restrain his movement. While there are certainly innumerable methods

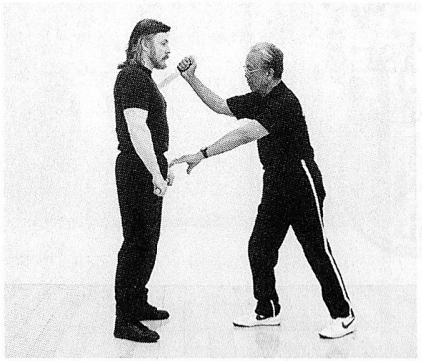


Fig 1

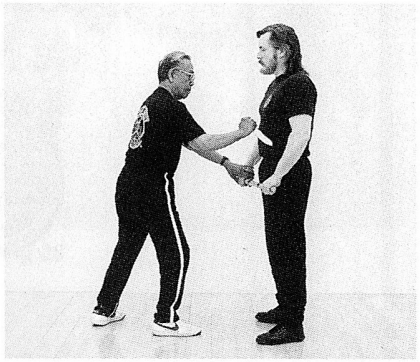


Fig 2

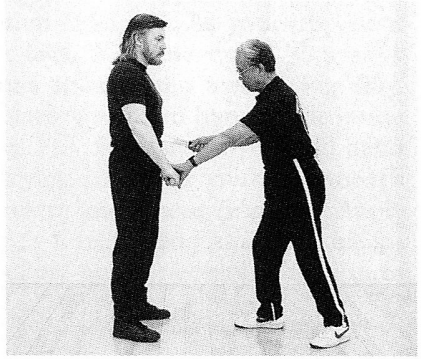


Fig 3

of defending against an opponent with the empty hands, we are concerned here with illustrating basic disarming maneuvers against an opponent armed with a knife.

There are three major knife attacks that an attacker will most likely initiate: First is the stab (Fig. 1), the second is the slice (Fig. 2), and the third is the thrust (Fig. 3). A stab is usually aimed at the chest, shoulders, or sometimes the thigh. A slice is generally aimed at the kidneys, abdomen, throat, or arms. A thrust is generally intended to puncture the torso. As with the stick, the knife is a dangerous weapon to face empty-handed. Keep in mind, too, that the knife is more deadly than the stick as it can inflict a mortal wound faster than a stick, and while one can grab a stick they cannot grab a knife without being cut. Also bear in mind that aside from the aforementioned targets, other "targets of opportunity" can get wounded during a struggle. When facing a knife, always be alert and be aware! The following are but examples of basic disarming techniques against the first five angles of attack, the strikes one will most likely encounter on the street. Throughout the execution of these technique, be aware of your opponent's left hand and feet at all times.

Disarming Strike One

Face your opponent in a natural position (Fig. 4). As your opponent attacks with a diagonal, forehand slash, simultaneously step back to 6:00 with your right foot, parry your opponent's weapon hand using the palm of your left hand (facing down), and follow the flow of your opponent's attack by evading to the right (Fig. 5). Your opponent's natural reaction to this will be to pull back, at which time you apply thumb pressure counterclockwise to the back of his weapon hand and wrist (Fig. 6). Follow-up with a punch to the face, while maintaining the wrist lock (Fig. 7).

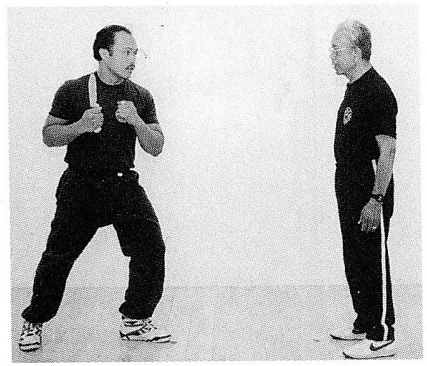


Fig 4

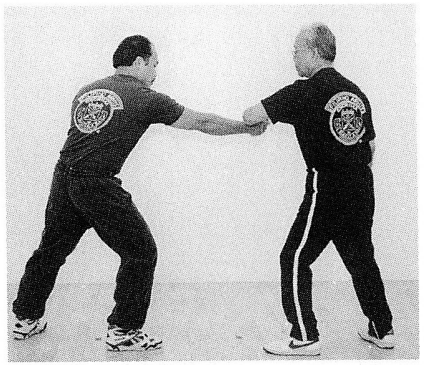


Fig 5

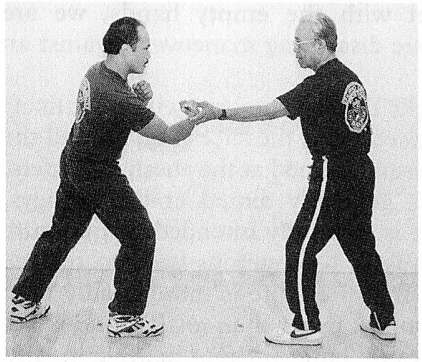


Fig 6

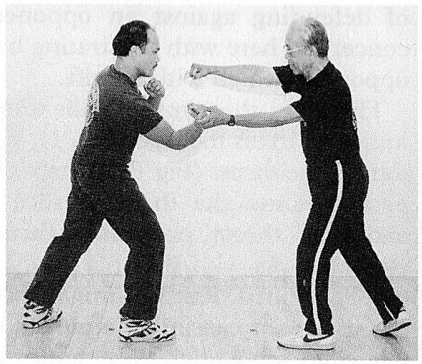


Fig 7

Disarming Strike Two

Face your opponent in a natural position (Fig. 8). As your opponent attacks with a diagonal, backhand slash, do an outside parry with your right hand to your opponent's attacking hand (Fig. 9). Immediately grab the back of your opponent's hand, step clockwise to 9:00 with your right foot, and press on your opponent's right shoulder with your left hand (Fig. 10). Next, simultaneously apply pressure to your opponent's right shoulder while pulling his weapon hand away from his body, and strike his ribs with your right knee (Fig. 11).

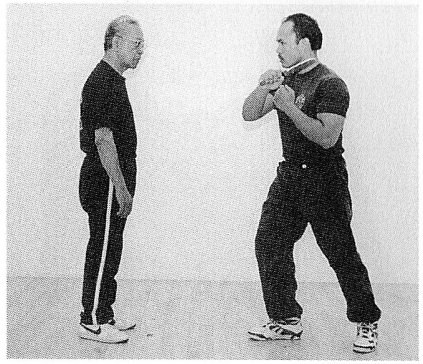


Fig 8

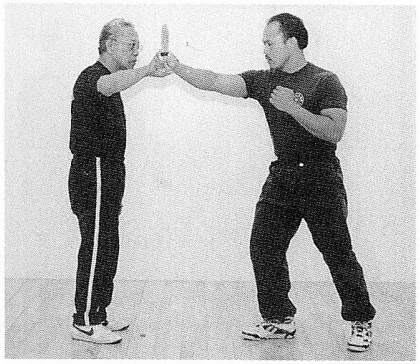


Fig 9

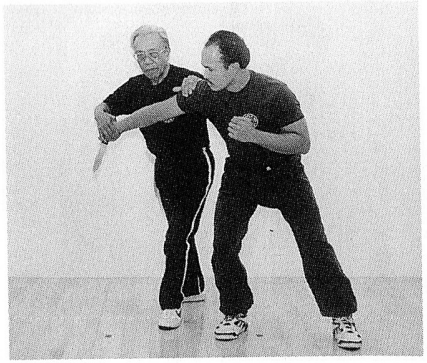


Fig 10

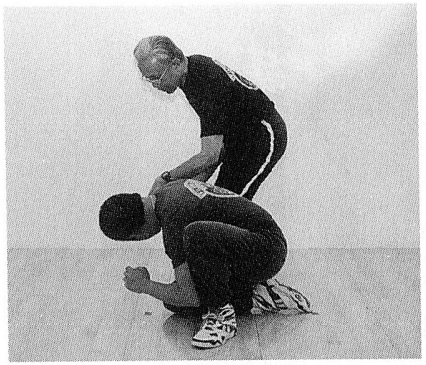


Fig 11

Disarming Strike Three

Face your opponent in a natural position (Fig. 12). As your opponent attacks with a horizontal, forehand slash, step back to 6:00 with your left foot. With the edge of your left hand, strike the wrist of your opponent's attacking arm (Fig. 13). Place your right hand on top of your opponent's weapon hand and apply pressure with your thumbs (Fig. 14). Twist your opponent's arm clockwise while applying pressure to his wrist and the back of his hand (Fig. 15). To finish the technique, drive your body toward your opponent, off-setting his balance (Fig. 16). You can follow-up with a kick or knee to his body or face if necessary.

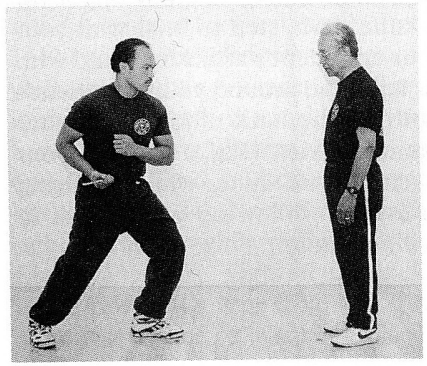


Fig 12

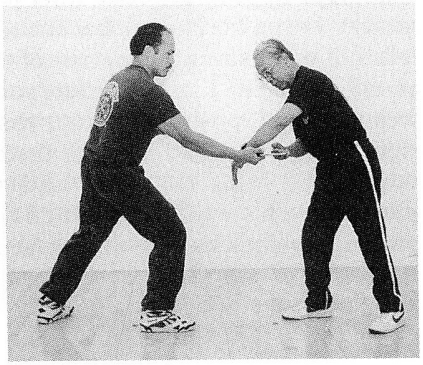


Fig 13

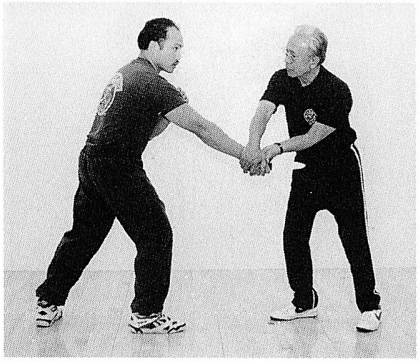


Fig 14

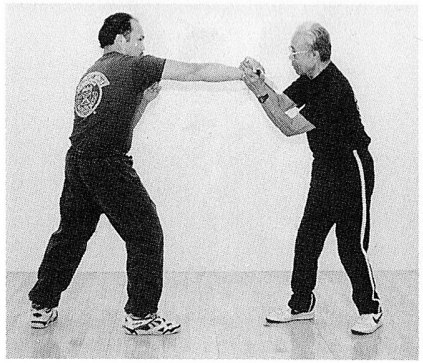
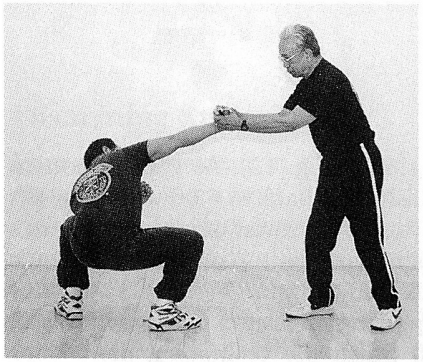


Fig 15



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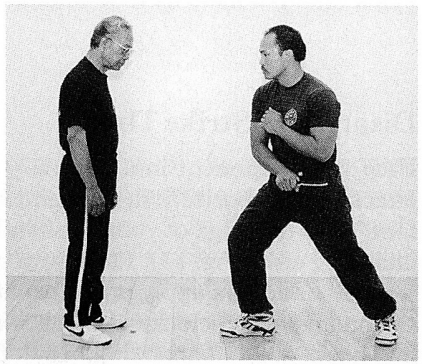
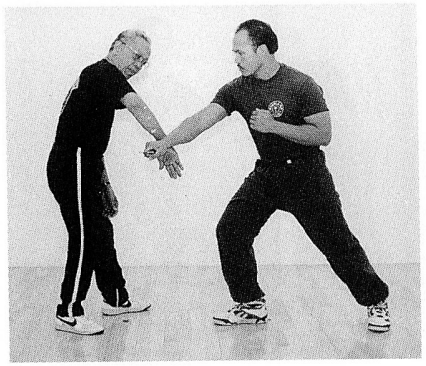


Fig 17

Disarming Strike Four

Face your opponent in a natural position (Fig. 17). As your opponent attacks with a horizontal, backhand knife slash, step to 9:00 with your left foot while striking the wrist of your opponent's attacking hand with your right hand (Fig. 18). Insert your left hand around your opponent's weapon hand, positioning your thumb on the back of his hand; your right hand will also slide into the same position (Fig. 19). Turn your opponent's hand clockwise and then toward him, while applying pressure to his wrist (Figs. 20, 21). You can follow-up with a kick to your opponent's knee, body, or face if necessary.



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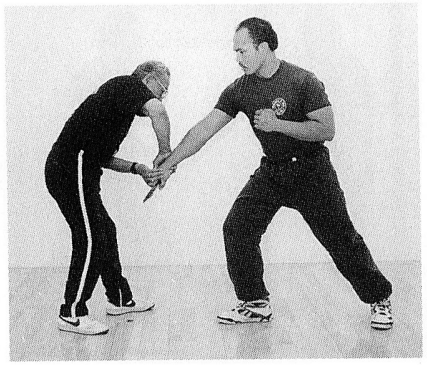

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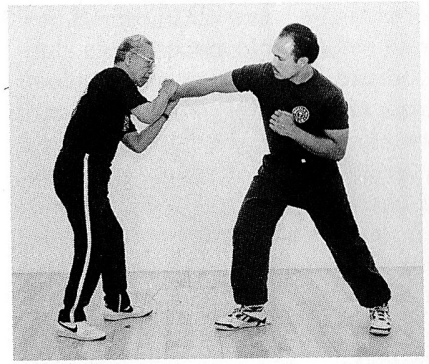


Fig 20

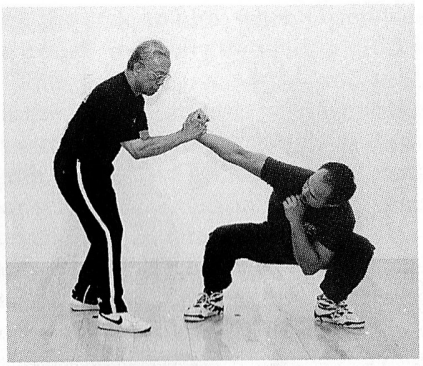
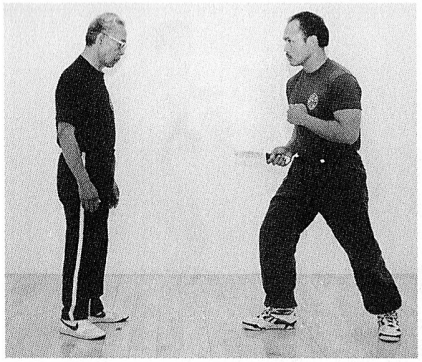


Fig 21

Disarming Strike Five

Face your opponent in a natural position (Fig. 22). As your opponent attacks with a forward knife thrust, simultaneously step forward to 11:00 with your left foot, turn your body slightly to the right, and parry your opponent's weapon hand with your left hand (Fig. 23). Next, immediately grab the inside of your opponent's elbow with your right hand, collapsing his arm, and insert your left hand to the inside of your opponent's hand, pulling with your right hand and prying up with your left hand (Fig. 24). Now insert your left arm to the back of your opponent's right shoulder, while pulling with your right hand on the inside of his elbow (Fig. 25). Tighten the lock by applying pressure by elevating your opponent's arm (Fig. 26). You can follow-up with a kick to your opponent's knee or a knee to his ribs or face if necessary.



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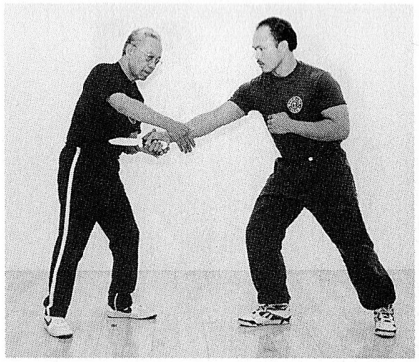


Fig 23

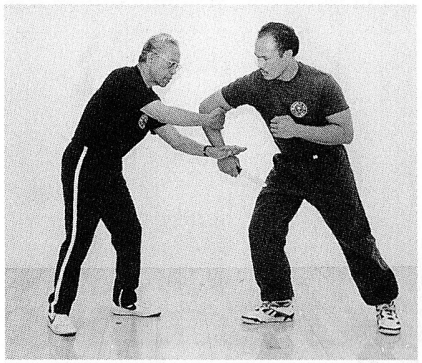


Fig 24

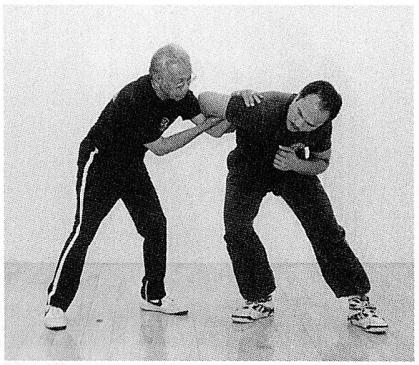


Fig 25

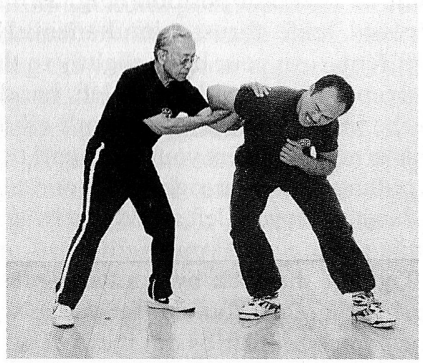


Fig 26

10

Basic Hand-to-Hand Defenses

Introduction

Grandmaster Giron learned the cadena de mano style from two teachers. Benito Junio was the first to teach the style to him, when Giron was only eleven years old. Master Junio would first start out with a crude-looking dagger made of bamboo. This progression would end with hand-to-hand training. Giron recalls the long, hot nights training under the mango tree. The moon light was setting and young Giron would use all of his senses to evade, parry, grab, twist, and lock the on-coming strikes that sometimes he would not see but feel. Giron's next teacher in the art was Fructuso Junio, the uncle of Benito. Master Fructuso would also drill the cadena de mano off the five basic strikes. But he would also include double strikes using left and right hand attacks—the empty-hand weaving pattern of the Macabebe style.

The following set of techniques are designed to ward off various attacks from an unarmed opponent. These techniques require keen hand-foot coordination. The aim of each technique is to successfully parry, grab, and lock an opponent's attacking hand or arm in an attempt to subdue or discourage him from further aggression. The following are but examples of basic empty-hand parrying, locking, and throwing techniques.

Technique One

Face your opponent in a ready position (Fig. 1). As your opponent attacks with a right-hand punch, do an outside, left-hand parry to your opponent's striking hand (Fig. 2). Immediately follow this by grabbing his wrist with your right hand (Fig. 3), at which point you rotate your hand clockwise to off-set your opponent's balance (Fig. 4). Once his balance is broken, direct the pressure of the lock down, forcing your opponent to the ground (Fig. 5). Follow-up as necessary to end the confrontation.

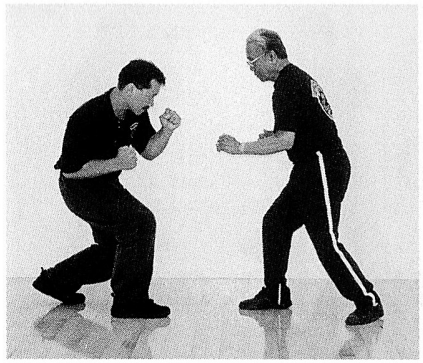


Fig 1

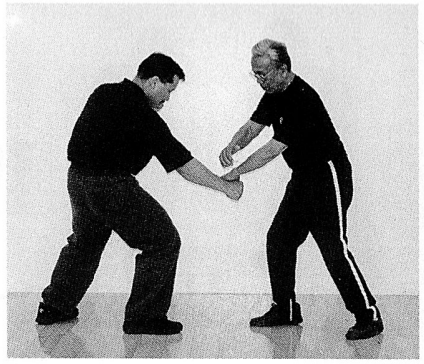
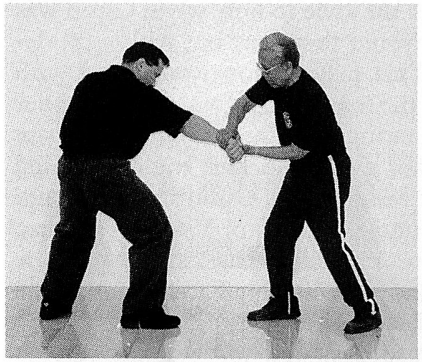


Fig 2



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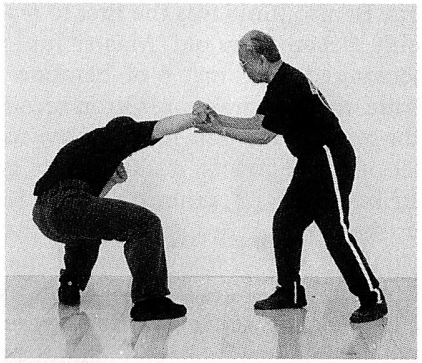

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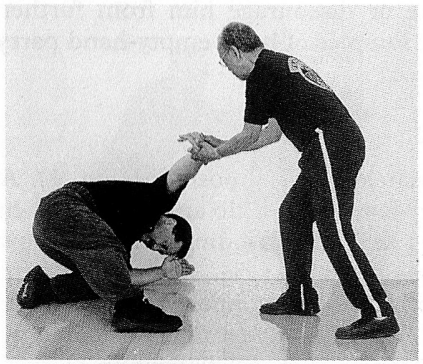

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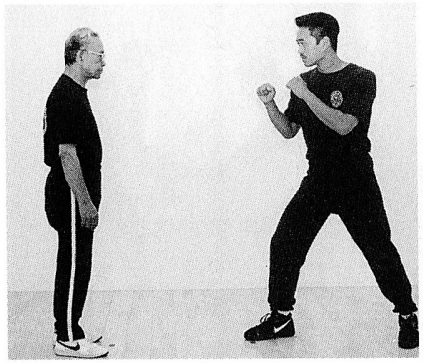

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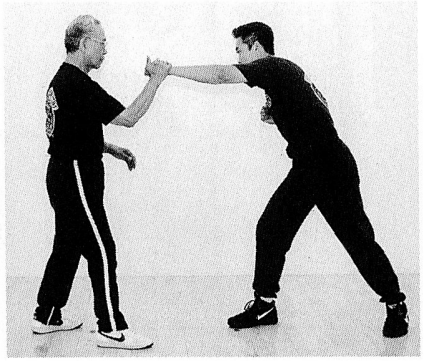

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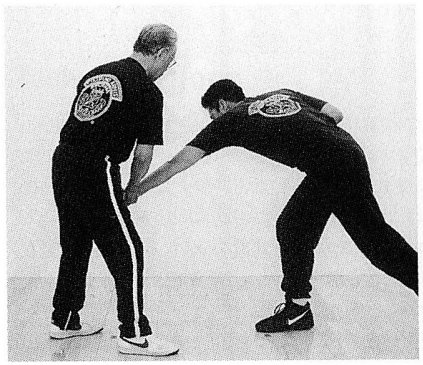


Fig 8

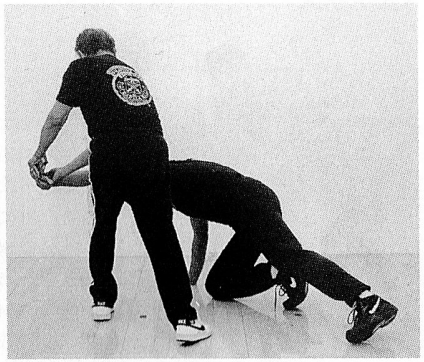


Fig 9

Technique Two

Face your opponent in a natural position (Fig. 6). As your opponent attacks with a left-hand straight punch, simultaneously step forward to 2:00 with you right foot and do an outside right-hand parry (Fig. 7). Immediately upon parrying the blow, grab your opponent's wrist and pull his arm down to break his balance (Fig. 8). As you pull your opponent off-balance, grab his wrist with your left hand and throw him to the ground (Fig. 9). Follow-up as necessary to end the confrontation.

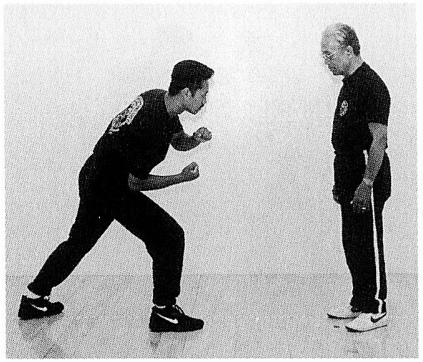
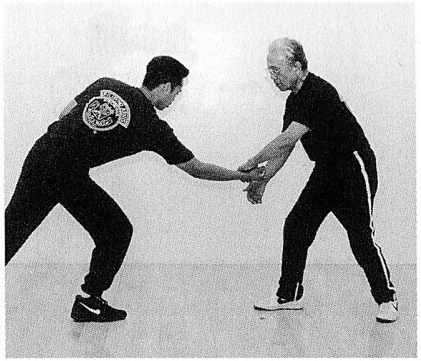


Fig 10



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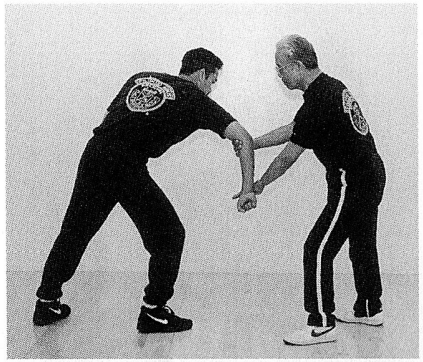

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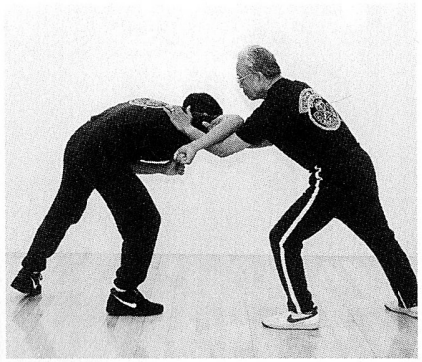


Fig 13

Technique Three

Face your opponent in a natural position (Fig. 10). As your opponent attacks with a right-hand uppercut punch, simultaneously step back to 6:00 with your left foot while doing a downward left-hand parry to the inside of your opponent's wrist (Fig. 11). Next, keep your left hand on your opponent's wrist while grabbing his inner elbow with your right hand (Fig. 12). Pull his elbow in toward you while inserting your left hand under his arm and on his shoulder blade (Fig. 13). Now that the lock is in place and your opponent is off-balance, pull him toward you to the ground (Fig. 14). Follow-up as necessary to end the confrontation.

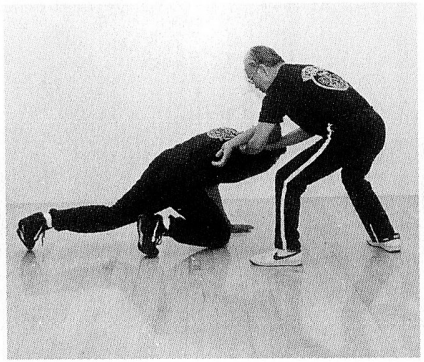
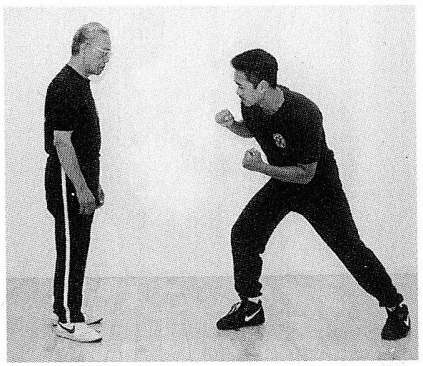


Fig 14

Technique Four

Face your opponent in a natural position (Fig. 15). As your opponent attacks with a left-hand uppercut punch, simultaneously step to 10:00 with your left foot while doing a right-hand downward block (Fig. 16). Upon making contact with your opponent's arm, rotate your hand to grab hold of his wrist, quickly place your left hand on the back of his head, and rotate your arms counter-clockwise, off-setting his balance (Fig. 17). Now that your opponent is off-balance, continue your circular motion to throw him to the ground (Fig. 18). Follow-up as necessary to end the confrontation.



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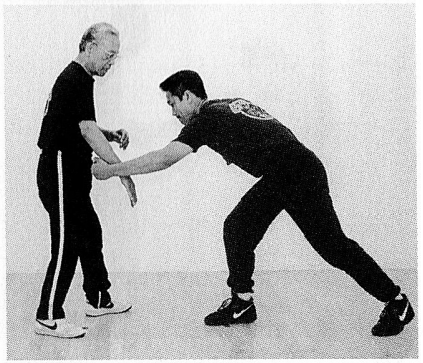

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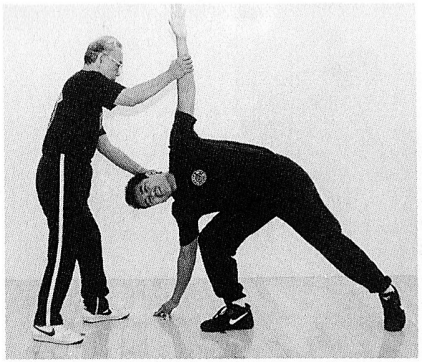

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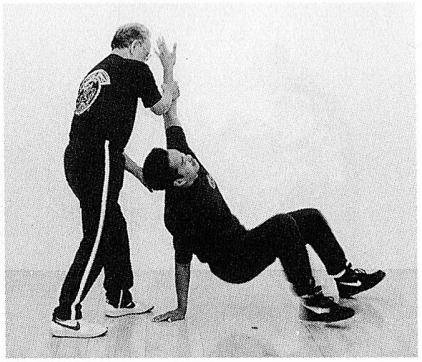
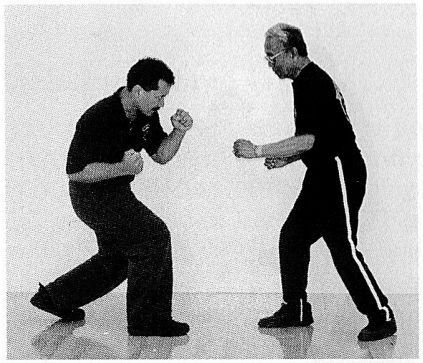


Fig 18

Technique Five

Face your opponent in a ready position (Fig. 19). As your opponent attacks with a right-hand punch, do an outside, left-hand parry to your opponent's striking hand (Fig. 20). Next, grab your opponent's hand with both of your hands and rotate it counter-clockwise (Fig. 21). While doing the wrist lock, be sure to place your thumbs on the back of your opponent's hand and apply inward pressure to create pain. Once your opponent is off-balance (Fig. 22), shift your weight toward him, and drag him to the ground (Fig. 23). Follow-up as necessary to end the confrontation.



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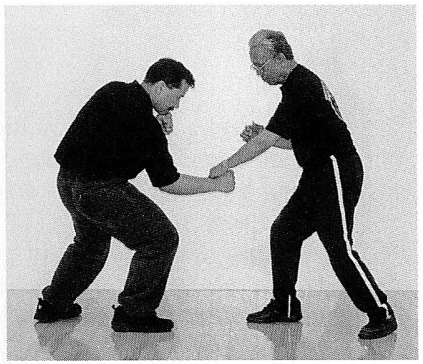

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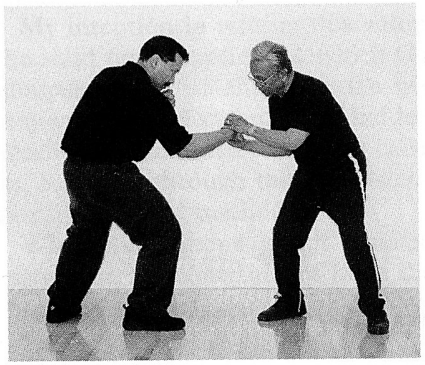

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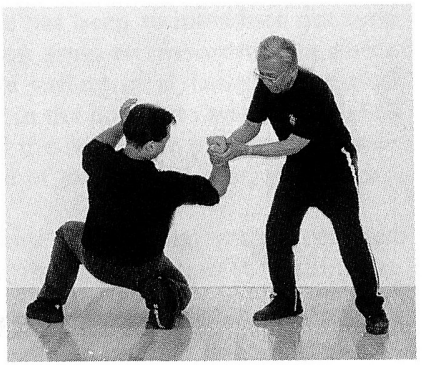

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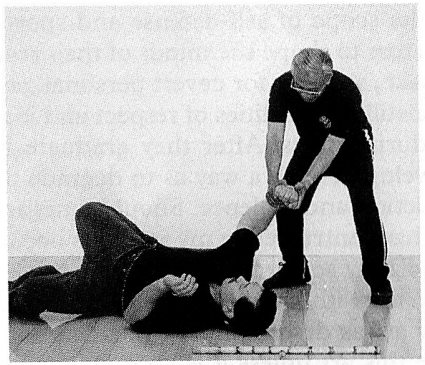


Fig 23

Afterword

by Grandmaster Leo M. Giron

The information I pass on to my students during their time with me is limited to techniques of self-defense. It is the intention of the instructors at the various Bahala Na Filipino Martial Arts Academies not to teach this art beyond the scope of self-defense and sportsmanship. It is the duty of all instructors to shape the minds of their students to accept the art for the art's sake, and not for covert personal gains. It is imperative that the teacher instill the qualities of respect and integrity in the minds of his students during class. After they graduate from the academy, students may develop in such a way as to degrade the art, using it as a vehicle for destruction and violence. Should a negative use of the skills and knowledge I have entrusted in my students occur, their relationship with me is immediately severed.

Since I cannot be with the reader while he studies the skills and techniques of my art as described herein, I can only trust that he will never have to use this art unless it is absolutely necessary for the sake of self-defense. It is my wish that the reader and all students learn to use passive resistance. By realizing that because you have attained a level of proficiency in this art, it is you who has the upper hand in any confrontation, and must, therefore, be discrete in your ways. Seek to be friendly and gracious to all through the use of kind and tender words. Harshness in speech and mood only evokes negativity in others. Where there is trouble, there is no victor. If trouble should find you, and there are no other means of settling it, then be guided by the words inscribed on the sword of one of the famous knights of yesteryear:

No mu saquis sin rason,
No mi embaines sin honor
Draw me not without reason,
Sheath me not without honor.

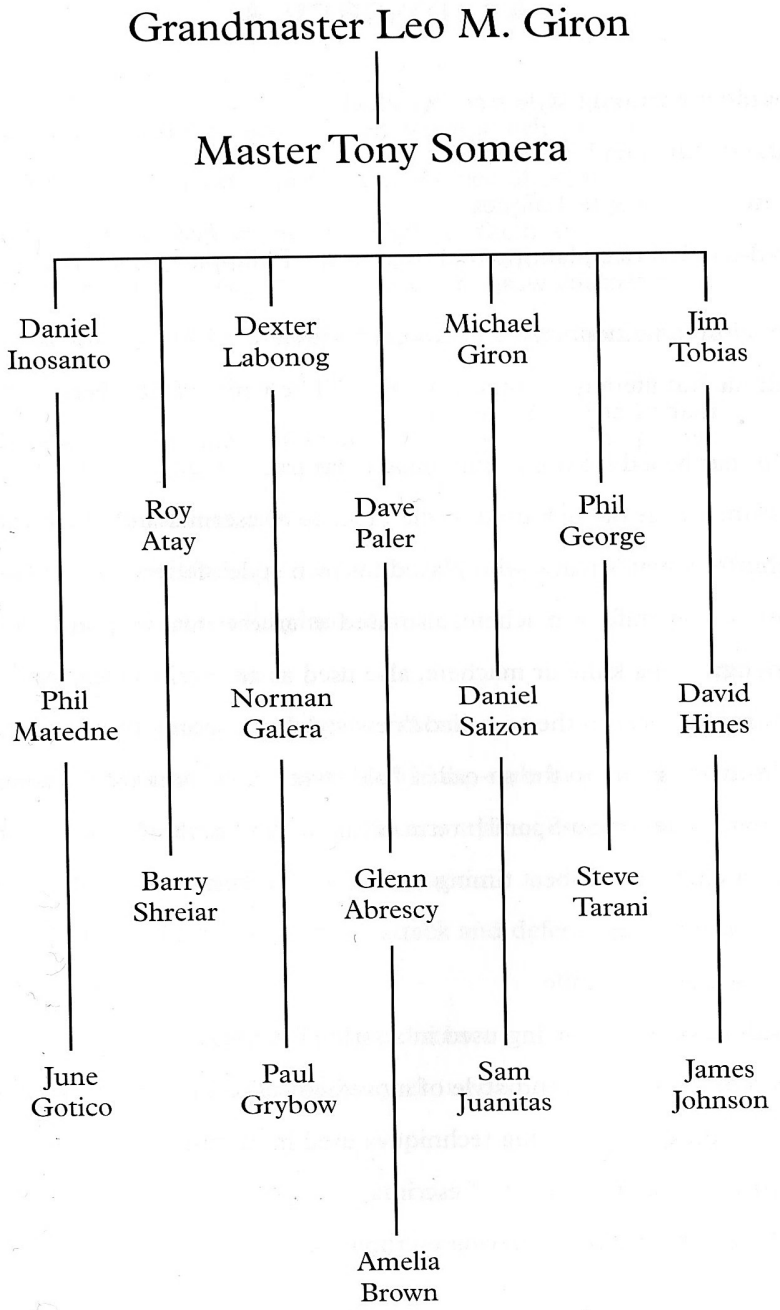
My intention in writing this volume has been to introduce not only the solid foundation upon which Giron arnis escrima rests, but also a glimpse of the potential for the wide variety of stylistic and tactical responses included, but often hidden, in the complete system. This full creation is contained in what is called the fan of the master *(el abanico del maestro)*, through the co-existence of twenty different, yet interrelated, styles and methods.

While this volume is not a substitute for training with a certified instructor, it is our sincere hope that this introduction may stimulate interest and appreciation for the art.

Bahala Na!

Lineage of Giron Arnis Escrima

The following is a list of students who have not only graduated from (i.e., completed) the Giron arnis escrima system, but who are also certified to teach the art under Grandmaster Leo M. Giron and Master Tony Somera. All instructors are certified through Bahala Na each year by Grandmaster Leo M. Giron and Master Tony Somera during the testing and initiation ceremony.



▲ Glossary ▲

abanico: a fanning-style strike or block

abierta: an open body stance

agaw: disarming techniques

asad-asad: a rice planting tool used in the Philippines; also used as an escrima weapon

atencion: attention, or the attention position

Bahala Na: literally, "Come what may." The name of Leo Giron's martial arts club/association.

bahi: hardwood from the Philippine palm tree

baston: a cane or stick used in the practice of escrima and arnis

Bolante: a man's name who played his own style of escrima

bolo: a long knife or machete, also used as an escrima weapon

boneng: a long knife or machete, also used as an escrima weapon

cabaroan: refers to the so-called "new style" of escrima from Luzon

cada-anan: refers to the so-called "old style" of escrima from Luzon

combate adentro: a Spanish term meaning "in fighting"

contra compas: off-beat timing techniques in escrima

corto: short range

daga: a dagger or knife

de salon: steps of dancing used in a style of escrima

elastico: the rubber band-style of movement used in escrima

escapo: escape or parrying techniques used in escrima

escrimador: a practitioner of escrima

estilo: an art or style of playing escrima

de fondo: to anchor or plant oneself

fuerte: without losing ground, a movement style in escrima

garrote: a stick or cane used in the practice of escrima

grave: meaning very serious, or a fight to the death

guro: a teacher or instructor in escrima

kamagong: a dark hardwood extracted from the nara tree

largo: long range

Macabebe: the name of a town in the province of Pampanga; also a style of escrima using two sticks

maestro: a master of escrima

mano: hand or hands

manong: a respected Filipino elder

media: medium range

miscla: a multiple-striking style of escrima

payong: an umbrella or shade; a blocking style in escrima

pisada: meaning heavy or with force; a style of escrima

punio: the butt end of an escrima weapon

redonda: a style circular style of attack and defense in escrima

tero: a strike

tersia: one-third range or fighting distance

tranka: to secure; locking techniques used in escrima